E.19.31

A

TREATISE

PARTLY

THEOLOGICAL,

And Partly

POLITICAL,

Containing ſome few

DISCOURSES,

To prove that the *Liberty* of PHILOSOPHIZING (that is Making Uſe of *Natural Reaſon*) may be allow'd without any prejudice to *Piety*, or to the *Peace* of any *Common-wealth*; And that the Loſs of *Public Peace* and *Religion* it ſelf muſt neceſſarily follow, where ſuch a *Liberty* of *Reaſoning* is taken away.

BIBLIOTECA CENTRALE

John *Epiſt. 1ſt chap. 4th v. 13th.*

Hereby know we, that we dwell in God, and God in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.

Tranſlated out of *Latin.*

LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1689.

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THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER.

THE Gentleman *that turn'd the following Treatiſe Written Originally in* Latin *into* Engliſh, *did it at ſpare Hours, only to divert and pleaſe himſelf, and therefore cares not who is diſpleaſed with his having done it. There are certainly ſome, who will paſs very ſevere Cenſures upon this Treatiſe; but that will not at all concern the Tranſlator, who is not bound to make good the Authors Opini-*

ons, being only obliged to justify, that the Version hath truly and faithfully (tho' not every where Word for Word) render'd the Authors Sense and Meaning. Religion and Government being the Subject Matter of the Book, 'tis easy to guess what Sort of Men are like to decry it; but let those who are angry and find fault with it answer it; In the mean time the Crape Gown and the Long Robe are both defied to prove there are any Tenets in the whole Treatise, half so dangerous or destructive to the Peace and Welfare of human Society, as those Doctrins and Maxims are, which have of late Years been broached by time-serving Churchmen and Mercenary Lawyers; for which they justly deserve the hatred and contempt of all Mankind. Nothing more needs be said to any Reader, than to desire he will deliberately read the Book twice over, before he condemn or commend it, when that is done, whether he like or dislike the Treatise it self, or the Translation of it, shall be all one to him, who never valued

lued himself upon other Peoples Opinions, nor did ever think any part of his Reputation depended upon the Judgment of Fools or Knaves.

THE

PREFACE.

WEre it in the Power of Men, to govern all their Affairs, by ſure and infallible Councel; or could Mankind always live in a conſtant courſe of Proſperity, there would be no ſuch thing in the World as Superſtition; but becauſe Men many times fall into ſtraights, out of which no Councel can deliver them, and by immoderately coveting the uncertain Goods of Fortune, miſerably Fluctuate between hope and fear; thoſe two Paſſions eaſily driving the doubtful mind of Man hither and thither, render it prone to believe any thing, whereas otherwiſe it is over Confident, Proud and Vain-glorious. And of this, tho' few know themſelves, there is ſcarce any Body ignorant: Do we not daily ſee many weak Men

Men during prosperity so wise in their own conceit, that they think Councel an Affront; but in adversity when they know not which way to turn themselves, begging every Bodies Advice, and there is not any, be it never so vain, fooliſh and absurd, which they will not follow upon very light grounds, they will also hope the best, and presently again fear the worst, whatever happens during their fears which puts them in mind of any past good or evil, that they think Prognosticates good or bad Fortune, and tho' they be a hundred times deceived, count it a lucky or unlucky *Omen*. Whatever is strange and unwonted, begets their Wonder, and looking upon it as a prodigy, say it portends almighty God's Anger; for the pacification whereof, Men given up to superstition, but Enemies to true Religion, think it horrible Impiety not to make Prayers and Oblations, and to that end fancying a Thousand things, as if nature it self were as perfectly distracted as they, make strange Interpretations of her Meaning. This then being the condition of Mankind, we find those Persons most addicted to all kind of superstition, who greedily desire those things with are uncertain, and every one of them (especially when they are in danger and cannot help themselves) with

Vows

Vows and Womaniſh Tears imploring Divine Aſſiſtance; calling reaſon (becauſe it cannot ſhew them a certain way to the vanities they deſire) Blind, and human Wiſdom Folly; but on the contrary, believe dreams, dotages of the Imagination and Childiſh Follies to be divine *Oracles*; ſaying that God deſpiſeth the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and hath not Written his Will in the mind of Man, but on the entrails of Beaſts, and that *Ideots*, *Lunaticks* and Birds by divine inſpiration and inſtinct, can foretel his Decrees, ſo mad hath Fear made Men. And as Superſtition hath its Original from Fear; ſo is it kept up and continued by it; of which Truth if any Man deſire (beſide what hath been ſaid) any particular Examples, let him read the 5*th* Book and 4*th Decade* of *Quintus Curtius*, where he will find *Alexander* the Great, applying himſelf to *Diviners* and *Prophets*, when he firſt began to doubt his Fortune at the Straights of *Suſa*; but after the Conqueſt of *Darius*, never more conſulting them, till terrified with the revolt of the *Bactrians*, and with the *Scythians* provoking him to Battle when he lay wounded; he returns again to the Folly of human Superſtition, and commands *Ariſtander*, to whom he gave much credit, to inquire by Sacrifices, what was like to be the event of his Affairs,

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and to this purpoſe many Examples may be produced, all which would clearly ſhew, that Men are moſt troubled with Superſtitious Fancies during their Fears; and all thoſe things which they have ſo vainly and religiouſly rever'd, are nothing but the falſe repreſentations and dotages of a Mellancholly and timerous Mind. And *Laſtly*, that they who pretend to prediction, are much in requeſt with the common People, and moſt feared by Kings and Princes, when a Kingdom is in any great diſtreſs or calamity, but becauſe theſe things are ſo vulgarly known, I paſs them by.

Fear then being the cauſe of Superſtition, it clearly follows, that all Men are naturally inclin'd and ſubject to it (whatever others ſay, who think it proceeds from a certain imperfect confuſed knowledg Men have of a Deity.) It follows likewiſe, that Superſtition muſt of neceſſity be very various and inconſtant, becauſe all ridiculous Follies of the Mind, Fits of Frenzy, yea Superſtition it ſelf, cannot be maintained, but by Hope, Hatred, Anger and Deceit; it proceeding not from Reaſon but Paſſion, and that too very violent. As therefore Men eaſily fall into all ſorts of Superſtition, ſo on the contrary, it is very difficult to make them continue in any one kind; becauſe the common People being all times alike

alike miſerable, are never long quiet, but ſtill moſt pleaſed with that which is new, and never yet deceived them; which inconſtancy, hath been the cauſe of many Tumults and cruel Wars, and as *Quintus Curtius* in his *4th* Book and *10th Decad* hath very well obſerved, nothing ſo abſolutely governs the Multitude as Superſtition. Whence it happens, that the common People under colour of Religion, are ſometimes eaſily induced to adore their Kings, and at other times to curſe and abhor them, as the common Plagues of Mankind: Therefore to avoid this miſcheif, great Pains are taken to adorn and attire Religion (whether true or falſe) that it may appear very Grave and Solemn, and all Perſons pay unto it the higheſt degree of reſpect and veneration. This hath ſo luckily ſucceeded amongſt the *Turks*, who count it a Crime ſo much as to diſpute, and have their underſtandings poſſeſt with ſo many prejudices, that there is no place in their Minds left for Reaſon, no not ſo much as doubt.

But if it be, as indeed it is, the great *Arcanum* and concern of Monarchical Government, to deceive the People, and to cover Fear by which they are kept in Subjection, under the ſpecious name of Religion; that ſo they may fight for Slavery

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as for their own Safety, and think it no Shame but their greateſt Honour, to ſpend their Bloud and Lives for the Glory of one ſingle Perſon; ſo on the contrary, in a free Commonwealth, nothing can be more miſcheivouſly deviſed or attempted, than to poſſeſs Mens Judgments which are free, with Prejudices; or in any manner to reſtrain or compel them, it being utterly repugnant to Common Liberty: As for Seditions ſtir'd up under pretence of Religion, they ariſe from enacting Laws concerning things meerly ſpeculative, and becauſe Opinions are many times Condemned for Crimes, and the maintainers and followers of thoſe Opinions, ſeldom Sacrific'd to the public Safety, but to the Hatred and Cruelty of their Adverſaries: But if the Laws of Government, would take no Notice of Words, and only puniſh Mens Actions, there could never be any lawful pretence for ſuch Seditions, nor could Controverſies be turn'd into Quarrels. Seeing therefore that Men are ſeldom ſo happy to live in a Commonwealth, where every one is allowed the Liberty of Judging and Worſhipping God according to his own Underſtanding, or where nothing is eſteem'd dearer and ſweeter then Liberty; I thought my Undertaking would be neither unpleaſing

or unprofitable, if I could make it appear, that ſuch a Liberty may be granted, without any danger to Religion, or the Peace of a Commonwealth; but that all three muſt ſtand and fall together. And this is the chief thing, which in this Treatiſe I intended to demonſtrate; to which purpoſe I thought it neceſſary, in the firſt place, to mark out the chief Prejudices concerning Religion, I mean the Footſteps of Antient Servitude, and in the next place, thoſe Prejudices which relate to the right of Sovereign Power; which many with ſhameleſs boldneſs ſtudy to Uſurp, and then to ſecure themſelves, amuſe the Minds of the Multitude ſtill Subject to Superſtition, with ſpecious ſhews of Religion, that all may again run into Bondage. In what order I make theſe things manifeſt, I will preſently in few words declare; but firſt I will mention the Cauſes which moved me to write.

I have often wonder'd, that Men who boaſt themſelves Profeſſors of the Chriſtian Religion, which conſiſts in Love, Peace, Moderation and Dealing uprightly with all Men, ſhould ſo unjuſtly contend, and cruelly hate one another, by which their Faith is better known, then by the forenamed Vertues. There is now ſcarce any Man whatever he be, *Chriſtian*, *Jew*, *Turk* or *Heathen*, that can be known by any thing

thing but his habit and attire, by frequenting ſuch a Church, by maintaining ſuch an Opinion, or by being the ſworn Diſciple of ſuch a Maſter; but in all other things Mens Lives and Converſations are all alike: Searching into the Cauſe of this Evil, I found it proceeded from the common Peoples being perſwaded, that a very great part of Religion, conſiſted in ſetting a very high value upon the Service, Dignities, Offices and Benefits of the Church, and in honouring Churchmen with all poſſible Reverence; for ſo ſoon as this abuſe crept into the Church, every Knave had a mind to be a Prieſt, and the deſire of propagating Religion, degenerated into ſordid Avarice and Ambition; ſo that the Temple it ſelf, was turn'd into a Theatre, where Eccleſiaſtical Doctors did not Preach, but like Orators harangued the People, not to inſtruct, but to be admired by them; publicly reproaching their Adverſaries, and venting ſuch new fangled Doctrines, as they thought would beſt pleaſe the Multitude. From hence neceſſarily aroſe thoſe great Contentions, Envy and inveterate Hatred, which no length of time could aſſwage. Tis no wonder then, that of the primitive Religion, nothing remains but

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the external worſhip; wherein the People ſeem rather to Flatter than Adore God; Faith is become nothing but credulity and prejudice, ſuch as turns rational Men into Brutes, by denying them the Liberty of their Judgment to diſtinguiſh Truth from Falſhood, and ſuch as ſeems purpoſely invented, totally to extinguiſh the Light of Human Underſtanding. Piety and Religion, O immortal God! now conſiſt in abſurd Myſteries, and they that contemn and reject Human Reaſon and Knowledge, as naturally depraved, they forſooth, which is ſtrangely irrational, muſt paſs for Men divinely illuminated. Truly if ſuch Men had but one ſpark of Divine Light, they could not be ſo ſuperciliouſly Mad, but would learn to Worſhip God with more Prudence, and inſtead of hating, as they now do, would love thoſe that differ from them in Opinion; and forbearing to proſecute them with ſo much enmity, would rather (ſince they pretend to fear their Salvation, more then their own Fortune) have pity and compaſſion upon them: Moreover, if ſuch Men had any Divine Light, it would appear in their Doctrine. I confeſs they pretend, they can never enough admire the profound Myſteries of the Scripture, yet I cannot perceive they teach any thing, but the

Speculations of *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*, to which, that they may not ſeem followers of the *Gentiles*, they have fitted and accomodated the Scripture; and, as if it were not enough, for theſe Men to run mad with the *Greeks*, would have the very *Prophets* alſo to doat like themſelves; which clearly ſhews, they never ſaw the Divinity of the Scripture, no not ſo much as in a dream. By how much the more they admire the Myſteries of Scripture, ſo much the more they ſeem to flatter and ſooth Scripture, rather than believe it; of which likewiſe another Evidence is, that many Men (as to the better underſtanding and finding out the true meaning of Scripture) lay it down for a Principal and Fundamental poſition, that the Scripture is of divine inſpiration, and in every part infallibly true; which is the very thing that cannot be made out or proved by any other way, but a ſtrict examination and right underſtanding thereof; and do likewiſe eſtabliſh it for a rule, that in interpreting Scripture, which needs no human Gloſſes, the Scripture it ſelf is our beſt guide.

When I ſeriouſly conſidered that natural reaſon was not only contemned, but alſo by many condemn'd, for the Fountain of Impiety, and human inventions paſt for divine Doctrins; that Credulity was accounted Faith, and Philoſophical Controverſies

troverſies were maintaned both in Church and State with ſo much animoſity and heat of diſpute; from whence I perceived that not only cruel hatred and diſſention (by which Men are eaſily ſtir'd up to ſedition) but many other miſcheifs (too tedious to be here mentioned) took their beginning; I reſolved diligently to examin the Scripture a new, with a free and unprejudiced mind, and neither to affirm any thing poſitively of it, or admit any thing to be it's Doctrine which was not clearly Demonſtrated by it. Under this caution, I Compoſed a method of interpreting the Sacred Volums, and furniſht with it, I began in the firſt place to inquire, what Propheſy was? why God revealed himſelf to the *Prophets*? and whether they were acceptable to God, becauſe they had ſublime thoughts and notions of God and Nature, or only for their Piety? Theſe things being known, I could eaſily determin that the Authority of the *Prophets*, was of greateſt weight in things relating to real vertue, and to the uſe and benefit of Life; but in other matters, their opinions did very little concern us. This being likewiſe known, I further inquired, what it was for which the *Jews* were called Gods choſen People, and when I perceived, it was only becauſe God choſe out for them, a particular part and climate of the World, where they might live conveniently and

ſecurely; I thereby alſo learnt, that the Laws revealed by God to *Moſes*, were nothing elſe but the Statutes of that particular government of the *Jews*, and that none but the *Jews*, were bound to receive them; yea that the very *Jews* themſelves, were not bound by them any longer, then their Government continued. That I might know whether it can be concluded from Scripture, that the underſtanding of of Mankind is depraved by Nature, I inquired whether the *Catholic* Religion, or the Divine Law revealed to all Mankind by the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, were any other then that which natural Reaſon teacheth and *Laſtly*, whether Miracles happen contrary to the order of Nature? and whether they do more certainly and clearly prove the Being and Providence of God, then thoſe things do, which we clearly and diſtinctly underſtand by their firſt Cauſes? but when I could find nothing in whatever the Scripture expreſly teacheth, diſagreable or repugnant to human underſtanding, and when I likewiſe ſaw, that the *Prophets* taught nothing but what was plain, and might eaſily be underſtood, and that they adorn'd and confirm'd their Doctrin, with ſuch a Style and ſuch reaſons, as they thought would moſt affect the minds of the multitude with Devotion towards God;

God; I was fully perſwaded, that the Scripture left reaſon perfectly free, and had nothing to do with Philoſophy; but that each ſtood on its own baſis. But that I might plainly demonſtrate theſe things, and put an end to the whole matter, I ſhew which way the Scripture is to be interpreted, and that all its knowledge of things Spiritual, is to be drawn from it ſelf, and not from thoſe things which we know by the light of nature. Then I paſs on, to ſhew thoſe prejudices which ſpring from thence, and that the common People (addicted to Superſtition, prizing the reliques of time above eternity) do rather adore the Books of the Scripture, than the very word of God it ſelf. After this I ſhew the revealed word of God, not to be any certain number of Books, but a ſimple knowledge of Gods will revealed to the *Prophets* (that is) to obey God with the whole heart, by practiſing Juſtice and Charity: I ſhew that the Scripture teacheth this, according to the capacity and opinions of thoſe to whom the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* were ſent to Preach this Word, which they did, that Men without any reluctancy might cordially embrace it. The Fundamentals of Faith being diſcovered, I *Laſtly*, conclude the object of revealed knowledge to

be nothing elſe, but obedience, and ſo diſtinct from natural knowledge, as well in reſpect of its object, as its foundations and means; that it hath nothing in common with it; but each maintains its own proper dominion, without any mutual diſagreement, and that neither ought to be ſubſervient, or a hand-maid to the other. Moreover, becauſe the diſpoſitions of Men are very different, one being poſſeſt with this, and another with that opinion, and that which moveth one Man to Devotion, provokes another to Laughter; every one ought to have the Liberty of his own judgment, and the Power of interpreting the Principles of Faith, according to his own reaſon; and that no Mans Faith is to be juſtified or condemned, but only by his Works; ſo that all Men may obey God with Freedom of mind, and only Righteouſneſs and Charity be in eſteem. After I have by theſe things, ſhewed the Liberty granted by God's revealed Law to all Men, I go on to the other part of the queſtion, which is, that this Liberty may be allow'd, without any prejudice to the Peace of a Common-wealth, or to the Rights of the Supream Powers; nor can it be taken away, without great detriment and danger, both to peace, and the whole republick. To demonſtrate

demonſtrate this, I begin from every Mans natural right, which reacheth ſo far as every Mans Deſire and Power can extend it ſelf, and no Man by the Law of Nature, is bound to live according to another Mans Will or Inclination; but every Man is the aſſertor of his own Liberty. Further I ſhew, that no Man departs from this right, but he that transfers the Power of defending himſelf to another, and that he muſt neceſſarily and abſolutely be the keeper of that right, upon whom every one hath devolved his own natural right of living as he pleaſeth, together with the Power of Defending himſelf; and from hence I prove, that they who are poſſeſt of the Supream Power, have right to all things within their Power, and that they only are the Protectors of Law and Liberty; all other Men being obliged to Act, according to their determinations and Decrees; but becauſe no Body can ſo far deprive himſelf, of his Power of defending himſelf, as to ceaſe from being a Man, I thence conclude, that no Man can be totally deprived of his natural right, but that Subjects do ſtill retain by the Law of Nature, many things which cannot be taken from them, without very great danger to Government. Thoſe things being granted to be

their rights either by tacit implication, or by expreſs agreement and ſtipulation made between them and their Governours. Theſe things being conſidered, I paſſon to the Commonwealth of the *Jews*, which I fully enough deſcribe, ſhewing upon what Reaſon, and by whoſe Decree, Religion firſt began to obtain the force of a Law; touching upon ſome other things by the By, which ſeem worthy to be known. After this I ſhew that they who have the ſupreme Power, are not only Protectors and Interpreters of the Civil, but alſo of the Divine Law, and that in them only is the right of Judging, what is juſt or unjuſt, pious or impious. And then I conclude that that Right is beſt maintained, and the Government moſt ſafe, where every Man hath free liberty to think, and ſpeak what he thinks.

Theſe are the things, Philoſophical Reader, which I offer to thy examination; believing they will be acceptable to thee, for the Excellency and Utility of the Subject, as well of the whole Book, as of every ſingle Chapter, to which many things might be added; but to this Preface, I do not intend the Dimenſions of a Volum: the chief things in it, are ſufficiently known

known to Philoſophers, to others I care not to commend this Treatiſe, becauſe I have not the leaſt hope they will like it. I know how faſt thoſe Prejudices ſtick, which the mind of Man hath embraced under the form of Religion; I know alſo, 'tis as impoſſible to root out Superſtition, as Fear out of the Minds of the common People, whoſe conſtancy is but contumacy, and are never to be govern'd by Reaſon, but always raſhly praiſe or diſpraiſe. The Vulgar therefore, and all of like Affections with them, I do not invite to read theſe things, I had rather they ſhould contemn the Book, then be troubleſome by making perverſe Conſtructions of it, as they uſe to do of all other things; not profiting themſelves, but hindring others, who would reaſon more like Phyloſophers, did they not think Reaſon ought to be but a Hand-maid to Divinity: To Men of that Opinion, I think this Work extreamly uſeful, but becauſe many have neither mind or leiſure to read theſe things, I am forced here, as well as in the end of the Treatiſe to declare; I have written nothing which I do not willingly ſubmit to the Examination and Judgment of the chief Rulers of my Country: For if they ſhall think any thing I ſay, repugnant

nant to the Laws or public Peace of it, I willingly unſay and recant it. I know my ſelf a Man Subject to Miſtake, but I have taken the greateſt Care I could, not to Err, and particularly, that whatever I write, may in all things be conſonant to the Laws of my Country, and agreeable to Piety and good Manners.

A

TABLE

Of the ſeveral

CHAPTERS.

CHAP. I.

OF *Propheſy.*

CHAP. II.

Of Prophets.

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. III.

Of the calling of the Jews, *and whether the Gift of Propheſy were peculiar only to the* Jews?

CHAP. IV.

Of the Divine Law.

CHAP. V.

The reaſon why Ceremonies were inſtituted? of the belief of Scripture-Hiſtories, why and to whom it is neceſſary?

CHAP. VI.

Of Miracles.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Interpretation of Scripture.

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. VIII.

Sheweth that the Pentateuk, *the Books of* Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel *and the* Kings, *were not Written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear; and then inquires, whether thoſe Books were Written by ſeveral Perſons, or by one only, and by whom?*

CHAP. IX.

Whether Heſdras *did perfectly finiſh thoſe Books? and whether the Marginal Notes found in the Hebrew Copies, were but diverſe readings?*

CHAP. X.

The reſt of the Books of the Old Teſtament are examined in the ſame manner as the foremention'd.

CHAP. XI.

Whether the Apoſtles Writ their Epiſtles as Apoſtles and Prophets, or only as Doctors and Teachers? and what is the Office of an Apoſtle?

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. XII.

Of the true Original Hand Writing or Text of Scripture, why Scripture is called Holy? and why the Word of God? Laſtly, *that the Scripture ſo far as it contains the Word of God, is derived to us pure and uncorrupted.*

CHAP. XIII.

What is Faith? who are the faithful? what are the Fundamentals of Faith? Faith diſtinguiſht from Philoſophy.

CHAP. XIV.

Divinity no Hand-maid to Reaſon, nor Reaſon to Divinity; upon what ground we believe the Authority of Sacred Scripture.

CHAP. XV.

How Commonwealths came to be founded, of every Mans Natural and Civil Right, of the Right of Supreme Powers.

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. XVI.

No Man can transfer, or part with all his particular Right to the Supreme Power, nor is it neceſſary that he ſhould: Of the Commonwealth of the Jews, *what it was while* Moſes *lived? and what after his Death before they choſe Kings? and of the Excellency of it; laſtly, what were the Cauſes why ſo Divine a Commonwealth periſhed, and could not ſubſiſt without Seditions?*

CHAP. XVII.

Certain Political Maxims Collected out of the Commonwealth and Hiſtories of the Jews.

CHAP. XVIII.

That Religion, and all things relating to it, are ſubject to no other Power, but that of the Supreme Magiſtrate; that the external Form of Public Religious Worſhip, ought to be accommodated to the Peace of the Commonwealth, if we would rightly obey God.

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. XIX.

That in a free Commonwealth, it is lawful for every Man to think as he pleaſeth, and to ſpeak what he thinks.

The

CHAP. VIII.

Sheweth that the Pentateuk, *the Books of* Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel *and the* Kings, *were not Written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear; and then inquires, whether thoſe Books were Written by ſeveral Perſons, or by one only, and by whom?*

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Of the true Original Hand Writing or Text of Scripture, why Scripture is called Holy? and why the Word of God? Laſtly, *that the Scripture ſo far as it contains the Word of God, is derived to us pure and uncorrupted.*

CHAP. XIII.

Shews that Scripture teacheth nothing but what is very plain, intending nothing but Mens Obedience; neither doth it teach or declare any other thing of the divine Nature, then what a Man may in a right Courſe of Life in ſome degree imitate.

CHAP. XIV.

What is Faith? who are the faithful? what are the Fundamentals of Faith? Faith diſtinguiſht from Philoſophy.

CHAP. XV.

Divinity no Hand-maid to Reaſon, nor Reaſon to Divinity; upon what ground we believe the Authority of Sacred Scripture.

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. XVI.

How Commonwealths came to be founded, of every Mans Natural and Civil Right, of the Right of Supreme Powers.

CHAP. XVII.

No Man can transfer, or part with all his particular Right to the Supreme Power, nor is it neceſſary that he ſhould: Of the Commonwealth of the Jews, *what it was while* Moſes *lived? and what after his Death before they choſe Kings? and of the Excellency of it; laſtly, what were the Cauſes why ſo Divine a Commonwealth periſhed, and could not ſubſiſt without Seditions?*

CHAP. XVIII.

Certain Political Maxims Collected out of the Commonwealth and Hiſtories of the Jews.

CHAP.

A TABLE.

CHAP. XIX.

That Religion, and all things relating to it, are ſubject to no other Power, but that of the Supreme Magiſtrate; that the external Form of Public Religious Worſhip, ought to be accommodated to the Peace of the Commonwealth, if we would rightly obey God.

CHAP. XX.

That in a free Commonwealth, it is lawful for every Man to think as he pleaſeth, and to ſpeak what he thinks.

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CHAP. I.

Concerning Propheſy.

PRopheſy or Revelation is the true Knowledge of any thing revealed to Men by God; and he is a Prophet, who declares and expounds thoſe things which God hath revealed, to Perſons that cannot have any certain knowledge of thoſe Revelations, but muſt therefore only by mere Faith receive and embrace them. A Prophet was by the *Jews* called *Nabi*, (that is) an Orator or Interpreter; as appears in the *7th chap.* of *Exodus v. 1ſt. And the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *ſee I have made thee a God to* Pharaoh, *and* Aron *thy Brother ſhall be thy* Prophet, as if he ſhould have ſaid, *Aron* by Interpreting to *Pharaoh*, what thou ſay'ſt, ſhall Act the Part of a *Prophet*, and thou the Part of God.

We will ſpeak of *Prophets* in the next Chapter, but in this only of Propheſy. It follows from the definition which hath been given of it, that Natural knowledge

may be called Prophesy; for those things which we know by the light of nature, depend only upon the knowledge of God, and his Eternal decrees: but because this knowledge is natural to all Mankind, being founded upon Principles common to all Men; 'tis of no value with the vulgar, who always affecting things rare and out of their Road, despise the Gifts of Nature; and therefore whereever mention is made of Prophetical knowledge, they totally exclude Natural, which may with as much right be called Divine, as the other whatever it be; seeing the Nature of God of which we participate, and the decrees of God, dictate it unto us, neither doth Natural knowledge differ from that which Men call Divine, but only because Divine knowledge exceedeth the Limits of Natural; and because the Laws of Humane Nature considered in themselves, cannot be the cause of Divine knowledge: but Natural knowledge in respect of the certainty which it includes, and in respect of the Fountain from whence it proceeds, namely from God himself, doth in no wise give place to Prophetical knowledge, unless some will think or rather dream, that the *Prophets* had Humane Bodies, but not Humane Souls, and therefore their perceptions and knowledge were of a quite different Nature from ours. But

But though natural knowledge be Divine, yet they that poſſeſs and propagate it, cannot be called *Prophtes*, becauſe the things which they teach, may with equal certainty, and in as high a degree, be Apprehended and Embraced by others, as well as by themſelves, and that too not by Faith only.

Since therefore our Mind for no other reaſon, but only becauſe it containeth in it ſelf, the Nature of God, as its Object, and alſo participating thereof, is able to Form certain Notions which explicate the Nature of things, and teach us the uſe of Life, we may with reaſon conclude, that the Nature of Man's mind, being what 'tis conceived to be, is the prime Cauſe of Divine Revelation, for all thoſe things which we clearly and diſtinctly underſtand, the Idea of God (as we have already ſhewn) and Nature dictate to us, not in words, but in a much more excellent manner, and ſuch as beſt ſuites with the Nature of the Mind, as every one finds by his own experience, who hath but taſted what certain knowledge is: but becauſe my cheif purpoſe is to ſpeak of thoſe things which belong only to the Scripture, that little I have ſaid of Natural knowledge ſhall ſuffice, and I now proceed to other cauſes and means, by which God reveals to Men, thoſe things

which do exceed, and alſo thoſe which do not exceed the bounds of Natural knowledge, (for nothing hinders but that thoſe things which we know by the Light of Nature, God may by other ways, communicate to Men) of which now I will more fully Treat.

But whatſoever is ſaid upon this Subject, ought to be fetcht only from Scripture; for we can ſay no more of things that paſs our underſtanding, then that which the *Prophets* have deliver'd to us, either by word or writing; and becauſe we have not any *Prophets* that I know in theſe our days, all that we have to do, is diligently to peruſe the Sacred Volums which the *Prophets* have left us; but ſtill with this caution, that we determin nothing poſitively of things of this Nature, nor attribute any thing to the *Prophets* themſelves, which they have not plainly ſpoken and taught. But it is in the firſt place to be obſerved, that the *Jews* never uſed to make mention of mediate and particular Cauſes, nor ever regarded them; but for the promoting of Religion, Piety, and Devotion, had always recourſe to God, (for Example) if they got Money by the Trade of Merchandizing, they ſaid God gave it, if they earneſtly deſired to do any thing, they ſaid God diſpoſed their Hearts

to

to it, if they ſeriouſly thought on any thing, they ſaid it was declared to them by God; ſo that every thing which the Scripture ſaith God declared to any one, is not to be taken for Propheſy and Supernatural knowledge, but that only which the Scripture expreſly declares, or from the Circumſtances of the narration, plainly appears to be Propheſy and Revelation.

If then we run through all the Sacred Volums, we ſhall find, that all thoſe things which God revealed to the *Prophets*, were revealed to them either by words, or by Figures and Signs, or elſe by both together, and that the words, and Signs, were either real and true, without the imagination of the hearing and ſeeing *Prophet*; or but imaginary (that is) the fancy and imagination of the *Prophet*, even when he was awake, was ſo diſpoſed, that he verily thought, he heard words, or ſaw and beheld ſome thing or ſign. God in a true and real voice, revealed thoſe Laws to *Moſes*, which he preſcribed to the *Jews*; as appears by the 25*th chap.* of *Exod. v.* 22. where he ſaith, *And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy Seat, from between thee two Cherubims* which plainly ſhews, that God made uſe of ſome real voice, ſeeing *Moſes* whereever he pleaſed, found God ready to ſpeak

to him; and that only this voice, by which the Law was Publiſhed, was a true and real voice, I will preſently ſhew.

One would think that the voice by which God called *Samuel* was real; becauſe in the firſt Book of *Sam.* the 3*d. chap.* and laſt verſe, it is ſaid, *The Lord appeared again in* Shiloh, *for the Lord revealed himſelf to* Samuel *in* Shiloh *by the word of the Lord*, as if he had ſaid, the appearance of God to *Samuel*, was nothing elſe, but Gods making known himſelf to him by word, or ſignifyed no more, then that *Samuel* heard God ſpeaking: but becauſe we are forced to diſtinguiſh between the Propheſy of *Moſes*, and that of the other *Prophets*, it muſt be concluded, that the voice heard by *Samuel*, was but imaginary; becauſe it was like the voice of *Ely*, which he had ſo often heard, and therefore the ſooner wrought upon his fancy; for being thrice called, *Samuel* ſtill thought it was by *Ely*, the voice which *Abimelech* heard was imaginary, for it ſaid *Gen. chap.* 20. *v.* 6, *God ſaid unto him in a Dream*, and therefore *Abimelech* not waking, but in his ſleep, (the time when the fancy is naturally moſt apt to imagin things that are not) might have a ſtrong Impreſſion of Gods Will upon his Imagination.

It is the Opinion of ſome *Jews*, that the words of the Decalogue, were not vocally pronounced by God; but that the *Iſraelites* only heard a noiſe, which did not articulately form words, but that the People during the noiſe, mentally underſtood the Laws of the Decalogue, which was once alſo my own Opinion, becauſe I found the words of the Decalogue in *Exodus*, to differ from thoſe of the Decalogue in *Deutronomy*: whence it might ſeem to follow, ſeeing God ſpake but once, that the Decalogue is not the very words of God, but only contains the Sence or ſignification of his Will. But unleſs we will wreſt the Scripture, it muſt be granted, that the *Iſraelites* did hear a real and true voice; for the 4*th verſ.* of the 5*th chap.* of *Deut.* ſaith, *The Lord talked with you Face to Face in the Mount*, (that is) as two Men uſe Perſonally and Corporally, to communicate their conceptions one to another; therefore it ſeems much more conſonant to Scripture, that God did really create a voice, by which he revealed the Decalogue; but the reaſon why the words of the two Decalogues vary, may be ſeen in the 8*th* following Chapter of this Book; yet that neither fully ſolves the doubt; for it ſeems very Irrational, to conclude that any thing created by, and depending on,

God as all other created Beings do, ſhould be able to expreſs or expound, the Eſſence or Exiſtence of God Perſonally, *viz.* by ſaying in the firſt Perſon, I am the Lord thy God, though where a Man ſays with his Mouth, I underſtand, yet no Body thinks 'tis the mouth of that Man, but his Mind that underſtands; but becauſe the mouth hath Reference to the Nature of the Man that ſaid it, and the Perſon alſo to whom it was ſaid knows what is the Nature of the Intellect, he eaſily underſtands the mind of the ſpeaking Perſon, by a Comparative conſideration of himſelf, but they who knew nothing of God, but his mere name, and deſired him to ſpeak that they might be certain of his Exiſtence, how could they be ſatisfyed in their Requeſt by any Creatures ſaying, I am thy God; when that Creature which ſaid ſo, did no more reſemble God, nor belong to his Nature, then any other Creature did, what if God ſhould have Framed the Lips of *Moſes*, yea of any Beaſt? to have articulatly pronounced and ſpoken thoſe words, *I am thy God* doth it follow, that the *Iſraelites* ſhould thereby have underſtood the Being and Exiſtence of God? Moreover, the Scripture ſeems plainly to declare, that God himſelf ſpoke, (and for that end deſcended from Heaven down upon *Mount Sinai*)

Sinai) and that not only the *Jews* heard him ſpeak, but alſo the Nobles and Elders, as we read in the 24*th c.* of *Ex.* Neither doth the Law revealed to *Moſes*, to or from which, nothing was to be added or taken away, and was the Eſtabliſht Law of the Country, ever command that we ſhould believe God to be Incorporeal, and to have no Shape or Figure; but only that we ſhould believe there is a God, and ſhould Worſhip him only, and that the *Jews* might not depart from his Worſhip, he commanded that they ſhould not fancy or make any likeneſs or Image of him; for ſince they had never ſeen any likeneſs of God, they could make no Image which would Reſemble God, but neceſſarily ſome other Creature which they had ſeen; and ſo beſtow the Worſhip and Honour of God upon that Creature. The Scripture expreſly declares God to have Figure, and that *Moſes* when he heard God ſpeak, happened to ſee it, though indeed it was but his back parts; in which there is a hidden Miſtery, of which we will hereafter ſpeak more at large. I will now go on to quote thoſe places, which declare the means, whereby God hath revealed his Decrees to Men.

That Revelation may happen only by Signs or Figures is plain by the 21*th chap.* of the 1*ſt.* Book of *Chron.* where God declared

clared his Anger to *David*, by an *Angel* holding a drawn Sword in his hand, in like manner to *Balaam*, and though *Maimonides* and ſome others would have it thought, that in this Story and all others, which relate the appearing of *Angels*, as to *Manoah*, and to *Abraham* when he would have Sacrificed his Son; the Apparitions were always in ſleep, (not that any Man broad waking is able to ſee an *Angel*) yet they talk to no purpoſe, for they minded nothing elſe, but ſtraining Scripture to countenance *Ariſtotle's* and their own idle Figments, than which nothing can be more ridiculous.

God revealed to *Joſeph*, his future Dominion by Images, that were not real and external, but internal and depending only upon the Imagination of the *Prophet*.

By Signs and Words God revealed to *Joſua*, that he would Fight for the *Iſraelites*, by ſhewing to him an *Angel* with a Sword in his hand, as Captain of the Hoſt, and by words alſo, which *Joſua* heard from the *Angel*, it was repreſented to *Iſaiah* by Figures *chap.6*. That God's Providence would deſert the People, by imagining the moſt holy God on a very high Throne, and the *Iſraelites* polluted and plunged in the filth of their Sins, and ſo at a great

a great diſtance from God : by which ſigns he underſtood the preſent miſerable ſtate of the People; but their future calamities were revealed to him by words ſpoken, as it were, by God himſelf. And of this kind, I could bring many Examples out of Sacred Writ, were they not ſo generally known to all; but all theſe things are more clearly proved by the Text it ſelf; in the 12*th.Chap.Numb.* *v.*6,7. *If there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make my ſelf known to him in a Viſion* (that is by ſigns and hieroglyphics (but as for the Propheſy of *Moſes*, it was viſion without ſigns) *and will make my ſelf known to him in a dream* (that is not in a true real voice and words.) *But to my Servant* Moſes *not ſo, with him will I ſpeak mouth to mouth, even apparently and not in dark Speeches, and the ſimilitude of the Lord ſhall he behold* (that is) beholding me as a Friend and Companion, ſpeaks to me without fear, as it is in the 33.*chap.*of *Exod.v.*11. Therefore without doubt the reſt of the Prophets, did not hear a true and real voice, which yet more evidently appears out of the 34. *chap.*of *Deu.* *v.*10. *And there aroſe not a Prophet ſince in* Iſrael *like unto* Moſes, *whom the Lord knew face to face*; which muſt be underſtood by voice only, for *Moſes* himſelf, as the 33.*chap.* of *Exod.* plainly declares, did never ſee God's Face.

Beſide

Beſide theſe ways and means, I have mentioned, I find no other in Sacred Sripture, whereby God hath communicated himſelf to Men; and therefore (as I have already ſaid) no other are to be ſuppoſed or admitted, and though we may clearly underſtand, that God may immediately communicate himſelf to Men, for he without uſing any Corporeal Means doth communicate his Eſſence to our Minds; yet that any man by the mind alone, ſhould comprehend thoſe things, which are not contained in the Principles of Natural Knowledge, nor can be deduced from them; muſt neceſſarily argue, that that mans mind, is far more Noble and Excellent, then any Human Underſtanding; Wherefore I believe, never any Man arrived to ſo great a degree of Perfection above others, beſide *Chriſt*, to whom the purpoſes of God, for the Salvation of mankind, were immediately revealed. So that God did manifeſt himſelf to the *Apoſtles*, by the Mind of *Chriſt*, as he did before to *Moſes* by an Aereal Voice, and therefore the Voice of *Chriſt*, like that which *Moſes* heard, may be called the Voice of *God*. And in this Senſe alſo we may ſay, the Wiſdom of *God viz.* Wiſdom more then Human, aſſumed Human Nature in *Chriſt*, and *Chriſt* was the Way to Salvation.

But I think it neceſſary for me here to declare,

declare, that ſome things, which ſome Churches determine and maintain, concerning *Chriſt*, I do neither aſſert nor deny; for I ingenuouſly confeſs, I do not underſtand them, thoſe things which I have affirmed, I have collected out of the Scripture it ſelf. I have no where read, that *God* appeared or ſpoke to *Chriſt*, but that *God* was revealed to the *Apoſtles* by *Chriſt*, who was the Way to Salvation. And laſtly that the Old Law was not delivered immediately by *God*, but by an *Angel*. Wherefore if *Moſes* ſpake to *God* Face to Face, as a Man uſeth to do with his Friend, (that is by the mediation of two Bodies) *Chriſt* communed with *God* mentally or Mind to Mind. I do therefore maintain, that beſide *Chriſt*, no Man ever reeived any Revelation from *God*, but by the help of the Imagination, or by the help of Words or Signs, and therefore to Propheſy, there is not ſo much need of a perfect Underſtanding, as of a Lively Imagination, as ſhall be ſhown in the following Chapter, we are now to inquire what the Scripture means by the *Spirit* of *God*, infuſed into the Prophets, or the Prophets ſpeaking by the *Spirit* of *God*; to find out the meaning of theſe Phraſes and Expreſſions, it is firſt neceſſary, to ſearch what the *Hebrew* word *Ruagh* ſignifies, which the Vulgar interprets Spirit.

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The word *Ruagh*, in its Proper and Genuine Senſe, ſignifies Wind, but is very frequently uſed, to ſignifie many other things, which nevertheleſs are derived from Wind: For ſometimes it ſignifies Breath, *Pſal.* 135. *v.* 17*th. Neither is there any Breath in their Mouths. Secondly* it ſignifies Life or Reſpiration. 1*ſt.* Book of Sam. chap. 30. *v.* 12. *His Spirit came again to him*, (that is he breathed.) *Thirdly*, it is taken for Courage and Strength, *Joſu. chap.* 11*th. v.* 11*th. There was not a Man left to breath. Ezek. chap.* 2. *v.* 2. And the Spirit (that is Strength) *entered into me and ſet me upon my Feet. Fourthly*, it is taken for Vertue and fitneſs, *Job. chap.* 32. *v.* 8. *There is a Spirit in Man*, (that is as appears in the following Verſe.) Wiſdom and Underſtanding, but is not always to be found in the Aged, for I now find it depends upon the particular Qualification aud Capacity of a Man. So in the 27. *chap.* of *Numb. v.* 8. *Take thee Joſua the Son of Nun, a Man in whom is the Spirit. Fifthly*, It is taken for a Man's Opinion, *Numb. chap.* 14 *v.* 24. *Becauſe he had another Spirit with him. Proverbs chap.* 1*ſt. v.* 23. *I will pour out my Spirit*, (that is my Mind) *unto you.* And in this Senſe. It is uſed to ſignifie the Will, Purpoſe, or Reſolution, the Appetite, the Deſire,

and

and the Anger or Paſſion of the Mind: *Ezek. chap.* 1. *v.* 12. *They went every one ſtraight forward whether the Spirit,* (or their Will) *was to go, they went. Iſaiah. chap.* 30. *v.* 1. *That take Councel but not of me, that cover with a Covering but not of my Spirit. Iſai. chap.* 29. *v.* 10. *The Lord hath poured out upon you the Spirit,* (that is) the deſire of deep Sleep, *Judges chap.* 8. *v.* 3. *Then their Spirit* (that is Anger) *was abated towards him. Prov. chap.* 16. *v.* 32. *He that ruleth his Spirit,* (that is his Appetite) *is better then he that taketh a City. Prov. chap.* 25. *v.* 28. *He that hath no rule over his own Spirit, is like a City broken down. Iſai. chap.* 33. *v.* 11. *Your Spirit* (in the Engliſh Tranſlation Breath) *as Fire ſhall devour you.* Moreover this Word *Ruagh*, as it ſignifies the Mind, ſo doth it ſerve to expreſs the Paſſions, and ſometimes the gifts of the mind. A high Spirit ſignifies Pride, a lowly Spirit humilitly, an evil Spirit hatred and melancholly, a good Spirit kindneſs and benignity, the Spirit of jealouſie, the Spirit of fornication, the Spirit of wiſdom, council, fortitude, which becauſe in *Hebrew*, *Subſtantives* are oftner uſed than *Adjectives*, ſignify a wiſe, prudent, valiant Mind. *Sixthly*, it ſignifies the life or ſoul, *Eccleſ. chap.* 3. *v.* ii. *Spiritus idem eſt omnibus, The ſame breath is to all, and the Spirit returns*

to

to God that gave it. Laſtly, it ſignifies the quarters of the World (from whence the wind blows) and likewiſe the ſides of any thing which ſtands towards thoſe quarters, as appears, *Ezek. chap.* 37. *v.* 9. and *chap.* 42. v. 16, 17, 18, 19. &c. Now it is to be noted, that a thing is attributed to God, and ſaid to be God's; *Firſt*, becauſe it pertaineth to the Nature of God, and is as it were a part of God; as when we ſay the Power of God, the Eyes of God. *Secondly*, when a thing is in the Power of God and Acts according to his Will and Pleaſure; ſo in Scripture the Heavens are called the Heavens of God, becauſe they are his Chariot and place of Abode. *Aſſyria* is called the Scourge of God, and *Nebuchadnezzer* the Servant of God. *Thirdly*, when a thing is dedicated to God, as the Temple of God, the *Nazarite* of God, the Bread of God. *Fourthly*, that which hath been deliver'd by the Prophets, and not revealed by the Light of Nature, therefore the Law of *Moſes* is called the Law of God. *Fifthly*, when any thing is ſuperlatively expreſt; as the Mountains of God, (that is) the higheſt Hills; the ſleep of God that is deep ſleep; in this ſence is to be underſtood the 11*th Verſe* of the 4*th Chap.* of *Amos*, where God ſays, *I have overthrown ſome of you as God overthrew* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, (that

(is

is) like that memorable overthrow: for ſeeing God himſelf ſpeaks, it cannot otherwiſe be properly expreſt, the Natural Knowledge of *Solomon* is called Divine, and the Knowledge of God, becauſe it was ſo much above that which is common. The *Pſalms* ſpeak of the *Cedars* of God, to expreſs their extraordinary height, in the Firſt Book of *Sam. Chap.* 10. *v.* 7. it is ſaid, *The fear of the Lord fell on the People*, which ſignifies a very great fear and in this ſenſe, all things which exceeded the Capacity of the *Jews*, and whoſe natural Cauſes where not known to them, were always referr'd and attributed to God. Tempeſts were called Gods Chiding and Threatnings, Thunder and Lightning his Darts and Arrows, they thought God kept the Winds ſhut up in the Caverns of the Earth, which they called his Treaſuries; in which Opinion they differ'd from the Heathen, only by believing God, and not *Æolus*, to be their Ruler; upon this ground Miracles are alſo called the Works of God, that is ſtupendious, wonderful works, tho' indeed all things in Nature are the Works of God, and only by Divine Power act and ſubſiſt; in the ſame Sence the *Pſalmiſt* calls the Miracles done in *Egypt* the Powers of God, becauſe in the *Jews* greateſt danger, they open'd a way to their ſafety and de-

liverance, when they leaſt expected it, and were therefore ſo much admir'd by them.

Seeing then the Works of Nature which are ſtrange and unuſual, are called the Works of God, and Trees of extraordinary height and magnitude, the Trees of God, it is no wonder that in *Geneſis*, Men very Valiant and of great Stature, tho' impious Robbers and Fornicators, were called the Sons of God, the Ancient Heathen as well as the *Jews*, uſed to attribute to God, every thing in which any one excell'd other Men; *Pharaoh* when he heard the Interpretation of his Dream ſaid, that the Spirit of the Gods was in *Joſeph*, and *Nebuchadnezzar* ſaid, the Spirit of the Holy Gods was in *Daniel*; nothing was more frequent among the *Latines*, then to ſay things very curiouſly wrought, were done by a Divine Hand, which Expreſſion if a Man would turn into *Hebrew*, he muſt ſay done by the Hand of God.

By theſe places I have quoted, many other in Scripture where mention is made of the Spirit of God, may be eaſily underſtood and explained, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of *Jehovah*, in ſome places ſignifie nothing but a vehement dry and deſtroying Wind, as *Iſa. Chap.* 40. *v.* 7. *The Graſs withereth, the Flower fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.* Alſo *Gen. Chap.* 1ſt. *v.* 2. *and the Spirit of God* (that

is

is a ſtrong Wind) *moved upon the Waters.* It alſo ſignifies a great Mind or Courage, the Courage of *Gideon* and *Sampſon*, are ſtiled in Scripture the Spirit of God (that is) a bold daring Mind, ready to undertake and attempt any thing. So alſo any particular vertue or skill more then ordinary is in Scripture called the Spirit of God, *Exod. Chap.* 31. *v.* 3. *And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in Wiſdom and Workmanſhip* ſpeaking of *Bezaleel*; ſo *Iſa. Chap.* 11. *v.* 2. *And the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him*, (that is) as the Prophet more fully explains himſelf, the Vertue of Wiſdom, Councel and Might: in like manner *Sauls* Melancholy, is called an Evil Spirit of God, or from God, that is, deep Melancholy; for *Sauls* Servants who called his Melancholy the Melancholy of God, were they that ſent for Muſick to recreate him, which ſhew'd that they did not think his Melancholy to be any more than Natural, ſometimes by the Spirit of God is ſignified the Life of Man, *Job Chap.* 27. *v.* 3. *The Spirit of God is in my Noſtrils* alluding to what is ſaid *Gen. Chap.* 2. *v.* 7. *God breathed into Mans Noſtrils the Breath of Life*; ſo *Ezek. Chap.* 37. *v.* 14. ſaith, Propheſying to the Dead, *and I will put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live*, that is I will reſtore Life to you, in the ſame Senſe ſpeaks, *Job Ch.* 34. *v.* 14. *If he*

gather unto himſelf his Spirit and his Breath; ſo likewiſe is to be underſtood the 3 *Verſe* of the *6th Chap.* of *Gen. My Spirit alſo ſhall not always ſtrive with Man for that he alſo is fleſh*, (that is) Man hereafter ſhall do according to the dictates of his Fleſh, and not of his Mind, which I gave him to diſcern Good from Evil, *Pſal.* 51. *v.* 10, 11. *David* ſays, *Create in me a clean Heart O God, and renew a right Spirit within me, caſt me not away out of thy preſence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me*; becauſe it was believed, that Sins came only from the Fleſh, and that the Soul or Mind did incline Men only to good: therefore the *Pſalmiſt* implores Gods Aſſiſtance againſt his carnal Affections, and prays that his Mind or Soul which God gave him, may be preſerved and kept by God, now becauſe the Scripture deſcribes God like a Man, and becauſe the Common Peoples Capacity is weak doth attribute to God a Mind, affections of Mind, and likewiſe a Body and Breath, therefore the Spirit of God is many times in Scripture taken for the Will, the Mind, the Power, and the Breath of Gods Mouth, *Iſa. Chap.* 40. *v.* 13. the Prophet ſaith, *who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord* (that is) who hath diſpoſed the mind of God, to will any thing which he himſelf hath not determin'd. Likewiſe *Chap.* 63. *v.* 10. *They rebelled and*

vexed

vexed his Holy Spirit. Hence it is, that ſometimes 'tis taken for the Law of *Moſes*, becauſe it doth as it were explain and unfold Gods Mind; for *Iſa.* in the 11*th V.* of the 63. *Ch.* ſaith, *where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him,* (that is) the Law; as is clearly Collected from the Context. *Nehemiah Ch.* 9. *v.* 20. ſaith, *thou gaveſt alſo thy good Spirit to inſtruct them,* ſpeaking of the time of the Law, *Deut. Ch.* 4. *v.* 6. *Moſes* ſpeaking of the Law ſaith, *This is your wiſdom and underſtanding,* ſo *David, Pſal.* 43. *v.* 11. ſaith, *Thy good Spirit leadeth me into the Land of Uprightneſs,* (that is) thy mind revealed to us, leadeth us into the right way, the Spirit of God alſo ſignifies the Breath of God, which is as improperly attributed to God as is Body or Mind, *Pſal.* 33. *v.* 6. *And all the Hoſt of them by the breath of his Mouth,* it ſignifies the power and might of God, *Job Chap.* 33. *v.* 4. *The Spirit of God hath made me* (that is) the Power of God or rather his decree, for the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaking poetically ſaith, *by the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth.* Alſo *Pſal.* 139. *v.* 7. *It is ſaid whether ſhall I go from thy Spirit,* where Spirit ſignifies Gods Power and preſence. *Laſtly,* the Spirit of God is uſed in Scripture, to expreſs the affections of Gods Mind, namely his Benignity Mer-

cy, &c. *Michah Chap. 2. v. 7. Is the Spirit of the Lord ſtraightned, are theſe his doings?* ſo *Zachary Chap. 4. v. 6. not by might not by power but by my Spirit*, (that is) only by my Mercy, and in this Senſe I think, ought to be underſtood the *12th Verſe* of the *7th Chapter* of *Zachary*, *They made their Hearts as an Adamant Stone, leaſt they ſhould hear the Law and the Words which the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent in his Spirit by the former Prophets*, where Spirit muſt ſignifie mercy, in this Senſe ſpeaketh alſo the Prophet *Haggai Chap. 2. v. 5. Loe my Spirit, that is my Grace and Mercy remaineth among you, fear ye not*; *Iſa. Chap. 48. v. 16.* It is ſaid, *the Lord and his Spirit hath ſent me*, there Spirit may be underſtood to ſignifie the Will and Mercy of God, or his mind revealed in the Law; for the *Prophet* ſaith from the beginning (that is when he firſt came to declare Gods Wrath and Judgments againſt them, he ſpake not in ſecret, from the time that it was publiſhed there was I, but now I am a Meſſenger of Joy ſent by the Mercy of God to proclaim your reſtauration: it may alſo as I have already ſaid be taken for the mind and will of God, revealed in the Law, (that is) he by the Command of the Law *Levit. Chap. 19. v. 17.* came to admoniſh them; therefore under the ſame conditions and in the ſame manner, he warns as *Moſes* did, and

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at laſt like *Moſes*, ends with predicting their reſtauration, but in my Opinion the firſt Expoſition ſeems the beſt.

To return to what was firſt intended, by all theſe Quotations it is evident, that theſe following plain Phraſes of Scripture. *The Prophets had the Spirit of God. God poured out his Spirit upon Men. Men were filled with the Spirit of God, and with the Holy Ghoſt*, ſignifie nothing more, then that the *Prophets* had ſome particular extraordinary Vertue above other Men, and were Perſons very Eminent for their conſtant piety: Moreover, that they underſtood the Mind and Will of God; for we have ſhewn, that the Spirit in the *Hebrew* Language, ſignifies both the mind and the purpoſe and reſolutions of the mind; yea the Law, becauſe it makes known Gods Mind, is called the Spirit and Mind of God: ſo that the imagination of the *Prophets*, foraſmuch as by it the decrees and purpoſes of God were revealed, may likewiſe be called the Mind of God, and the *Prophets* may be ſaid to have the Spirit of God, now though the Mind and Will of God, be Written in our minds, and his Eternal purpoſes and decrees be Engraven on our Hearts; and conſequently (to uſe the Scripture Phraſe) we alſo underſtand the Mind of God; yet becauſe natural Knowledge is common to all Men, it is very

little eſteem'd, and the *Jews* who valued themſelves above all other Nations, extreamly deſpiſed it, becauſe it was common to all Mankind. *Laſtly*, the *Prophets* were ſaid to have the Spirit of God, becauſe Men were altogether ignorant of the Cauſes of Prophetical Knowledge, and did not only admire it, but as they did all other ſtrange and unuſual things, aſcribed it to God as the immediate Author of it.

We may then without any ſcruple affirm, that the *Prophets* did no other way underſtand the revelations of God, then by the help of imagination; that is by the means of words or ſigns, and theſe either real or imaginary: for ſeeing we find in Scripture, no other means beſide theſe, it is not lawful to ſuppoſe or fancy any other: but by what Laws and Rules of Nature it was done, I confeſs I am utterly ignorant. I might with others ſay, it was done by the Power of God; but it would be little to the purpoſe, and no more then if I ſhould by ſome unintelligible terms expreſs the form of any thing, all things are done by the Power of God, for the Power of Nature is nothing but the Power of God, and 'tis certain that we therefore do not underſtand the Power of God, becauſe we are ignorant of natural Cauſes;

and

and we very fooliſhly have recourſe to the Power of God, when we know not the natural Cauſe of any thing, (that is) when we are ignorant of Gods Power, but we have now no need of knowing the cauſe of prophetical Knowledge, for as I have already intimated, we only endeavour to find out what the Scripture teacheth us, that from thence as from the precepts of Nature we may know our Duty, but with the Cauſes of Scripture-Doctrines we have nothing to do. Seeing then the *Prophets* by the help of imagination, underſtood thoſe things which God revealed, there is no doubt but they perceived many things, which were beyond the extent of natural underſtanding, for from words and ſigns many more Ideas may be formed, then can be only out of thoſe Principles and Notions, upon which all our natural Knowledge is founded.

Hence it is evident, why the *Prophets* perceived and declared all things parabolically and in dark Speeches, and expreſt all ſpiritual things after a corporal manner, becauſe that doth better ſute with the nature of the imagination; neither can we now wonder, why the Scripture or the *Prophets*, ſpake ſo improperly and obſcurely of the Spirit or Mind of God, as *Numb. Chap.* 11. *v.* 17. *I will come down and talk with*

with thee there; and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and put it on them. Likewiſe in the 1*ſt* Book of *Kings chap.* 22. *v.* 11. and *Zedekiah* the Son of *Chenaanah* made him Horns of Iron, and he ſaid, thus ſaith the Lord, with theſe ſhalt thou puſh the *Syrians* till thou haſt conſumed them, *Michah* ſaw God ſitting, *Daniel* ſaw him like an Old Man cloathed in white Garments, *Ezekiel* like fire, and they who were with Chriſt deſcending like a Dove, the Apoſtles like Cloven Tongues, and *Paul* before his Converſion like a great light, all which Viſions, agree with thoſe fancies and imaginations, which the vulgar have of God and of Spirits. *Laſtly*, becauſe the imagination is wandring and unconſtant, Propheſy did not long continue with the *Prophets*, nor was it frequent but very rare, and as there were but very few that had it, ſo likewiſe 'twas very ſeldom; we are now to inquire, how the *Prophets* could be ſure of thoſe things, which they perceived only by the ſtrength of imagination, and not by the certain Principles of mental Knowledge: but whatever may be ſaid concerning this Particular, ought to be fetcht from Scripture, tho' (as we have already confeſt) we have no true knowledge of the thing, and cannot explain it by its firſt Cauſes; however

ever what the Scripture declareth concerning the truth and certainty of the *Prophets*. I will ſhew in the following Chapter, wherein I reſolve to treat of *Prophets*.

CHAP. II.

Of Prophets.

IT appears by the preceding Chapter, that the *Prophets* were not endued with perfection of mind above other Men; but only with ſtrength and vivacity of imagination, which Scripture-Hiſtories abundantly teſtify: *Solomon* excell'd all others in Wiſdom but not in the gift of Propheſy, *Heman*, *Darda*, *Kalcoll*, tho' Men very Wiſe, yet were no *Prophets*, when plain Countrymen who had no Learning, yea Women as *Hagar*, *Abrahams* Maid had that gift: which is agreeable both to Reaſon and Experience; for they who moſt excel in fancy and imagination, are leſs apt to underſtand things clearly, and they that have excellent underſtandings, have their fancy and imagination not

ſo

ſo ſtrong, but better kept within compaſs, that it may not be confounded with the intellect: thoſe Men therefore, who endeavor out of the Books of the *Prophets*, to find the true knowledge of Natural and Spiritual things, are extremely miſtaken; which I purpoſe to ſhew at large, becauſe the Times, Philoſophy, and the matter it ſelf requires it. I will not at all value what ſuperſtition babbles to the contrary, which hates nothing more then ſuch Men as live good Lives, and are lovers of true ſolid knowledge; with ſhame be it ſpoken, 'tis now come to that paſs, that they who freely confeſs, they have no particular Idea of God, and only know him by created Beings (of whoſe Cauſes they are Ignorant,) are preſently branded with the Name of *Atheiſts*.

To proceed orderly in proving the Point; I will ſhew, that there was a difference between the *Prophets*, not only in reſpect of imagination and temperament of Body, but alſo in reſpect of the Opinions wherewith they were prepoſſeſt; ſo that they never became the more Learned by *Propheſy*; which I will preſently more fully make out, but I muſt firſt ſpeak of the *Prophets* certainty, becauſe it belongs to the Subject of this Chapter, and becauſe it contributes ſomewhat to the Proof of what I deſign to demonſtrate. Becauſe

Becauſe ſimple imagination doth not in its own Nature include certainty, as every clear and diſtinct Idea doth; there muſt neceſſarily ſome other thing accompany imagination, to make us ſure of the things we imagin, and that is reaſoning whence it follows, that *Propheſy* of it ſelf, doth not include certainty; becauſe it depends only upon the imagination, and therefore the *Prophets* themſelves, were not certain of what God revealed, by the Revelation it ſelf, but by ſome ſign; as appears by *Abraham Gen. chap.* 15. *v.* 8. And he ſaid, *Lord God whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall Inherit it?* asking a Sign after he heard the promiſe: without doubt he believed God, and did not ask the ſign that he might believe, but that he might be ſure the promiſe came from God. The ſame thing more plainly appears by *Gideon*, Judges *chap. 6. v.* 17, *and he ſaid unto him if I have found Grace in thy ſight then ſhew me a Sign, that thou talkeſt with me.* God ſaid to *Moſes*, *let this be a ſign unto thee*, *Ezechiah* who well knew that *Iſaiah* was a *Prophet*, asked a ſign of him when he foretold his recovery; which ſhews that the *Prophets* had always ſome ſign, by which they were certain of the things they Prophetically imagined; and therefore *Moſes Deut. chap.* 18.

18. *v.* 22. bids the People ask a ſign of any that pretend to *Propheſy*, which ſign was to be foretelling ſome future event. *Propheſy* therefore in this particular gives Place to Natural knowledge, which needs no ſign, but in its own Nature includes certainty; but the certainty of Propheſy, was not Mathematical, but only Moral, which alſo appears by Scripture *Deut. chap.* 13. *Moſes* warneth the People, that if any *Prophet* ſhould teach them to Worſhip any other God, tho' he confirmed his Doctrine by Signs and Miracles, yet the *Prophet* was to be put to death; for *Moſes* goes on and ſays that God did by Signs and Miracles prove the People, whether they loved the Lord with all their heart. Chriſt in like manner warneth his Diſciples, telling them *Math. chap.* 24. *v.* 24. there ſhould ariſe falſe *Chriſts* and falſe *Prophets*, and ſhould ſhew great ſigns and wonders. *Ezechiel chap.* 14. *v.* 9. plainly declares that God ſometimes deceives Men with falſe Revelations; *And if the Prophet be deceived when he hath ſpoken a thing*, I the Lord have deceived that *Prophet*; which *Michaiah* alſo teſtifies of the *Prophets* of *Ahab*, 1*ſt.* Book of *Kings chap.* 22. *v.* 21, 22, 23.

And tho' this ſhews *Propheſy* to be a thing ſomewhat doubtful and uncertain, yet it had a great deal of certainty in it, for

for God never deceiveth the Godly and Elect, but according to that ſaying in the 1ſt. Book of *Sam. chap.* 24. *v.* 13. *As ſaith the Proverb of the Ancients, wickedneſs proceedeth from the wicked, but my hand ſhall not be upon thee,* and as it likewiſe appears by the Hiſtory of *Abigal* and her diſcourſe, God uſeth pious Perſons as Inſtruments of his goodneſs, and wicked Men for Executioners of his wrath, this likewiſe is made Evident by the Caſe of the *Prophet Michaiah,* for tho' God had decreed *Ahab* ſhould be deceived by the *Prophets,* he made uſe of falſe *Prophets*; but to a good *Prophet,* revealed the Truth of what was to happen, and did not hinder the *Prophet* from foretelling the Truth; but ſtill the certainty of the *Prophet* was but Moral, becauſe no Man can juſtify himſelf before God, nor boaſt that he is the Inſtrument of God, the Anger of God led *David* to Number the People, whoſe Piety the Scripture ſufficiently declares, all Prophetical certainty was founded upon three Particulars. *Firſt* the *Prophets* did as ſtrongly, and with as much vivacity imagin the things revealed, as Men waking uſe to do the things they ſee; *Secondly* the certainty of the *Prophets* was confirm'd by a Sign, and *Thirdly* becauſe their Minds were continually inclin'd to Vertue and Juſtice, tho' the

Scripture

Scripture doth not always make mention of the ſign, yet we ought to believe the *Prophets* ſtill had a ſign; for the Scripture doth many times leave out circumſtances and conditions, and relates things as ſuppoſed to be known. Moreover, it is to be granted, that the *Prophets*, who *Propheſied* nothing new, but what was contain'd in the Law of *Moſes*, had no need of a ſign; (for example,) the *Propheſy* of *Jeremy* concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, needed no ſign, becauſe 'twas confirm'd by the *Propheſies* of the reſt of the *Prophets*, and by the threatnings of the Law; but for the confirmation of *Hananiahs Propheſy*, who againſt all the *Prophets* foretold the ſudden Reſtauration of the City, there was neceſſity of a ſign, till the coming to paſs of what he predicted ſhould make it good, *Jerem. chap.* 28. *v.* 9, 10.

Seing then the certainty of *Propheſy* which depended upon ſigns, was not Mathematical (that is ſuch as neceſſarily follow'd from the thing apprehended or ſeen) but only Moral; and that ſigns were given to ſatisfy and convince the *Prophet* himſelf, it likewiſe follows, that ſigns were given according to the Opinion and Capacity of the *Prophet*; ſo that the ſign which made one *Prophet* confident and certain of his Propheſy, could not aſſure another,

ther, as the ſigns were different and various, ſo alſo Revelation it ſelf did vary in every *Prophet*, according to the diſpoſition of his imagination, the temper of his conſtitution, or the Opinions wherewith he was prepoſſeſt, (for example) if a *Prophet* were chearful and merry, to him were revealed Victories and Peace, which cauſe Mirth and Gladneſs; ſuch things uſing to take up the fancy of ſuch Men, to a Man ſad and melancholly were revealed Wars, Plagues and Evils to come; if a *Prophet* were kind, merciful, chollerique or ſevere, accordingly were his Revelations: The fancy of the *Prophet* was alſo ſometimes, the cauſe that Revelations differed in Stiles for if the *Prophet* were of an elegant and exalted fancy, the mind of God was made known to him in an eloquent lofty Stile, if the *Prophets* fancy were obſcure and confuſed, ſo was in like manner his Revelation, when Revelations were made to a Country ruſtick, the ſigns repreſented were Oxen, Cows, *&c.* to a Souldier, Captains and Armies, to a Courtier, Palaces and regal Thrones. Laſtly Propheſy varied according to the Opinions wherewith the *Prophets* were affected, *Math. chap.* 11. to the *Magi* addicted to *Aſtrology*, the Nativity of *Chriſt* was revealed by a Star appearing in the *Eaſt*, to the Dreamers or *Prophets*

of *Nebuchadnezzar* was revealed the destruction of *Jeruſalem* by inſpecting the entrails of Beaſts; that King alſo underſtood it from Oracles and the Shooting of Arrows into the Air. To *Prophets* who believed Men had free Will, and Acted according to their will and choiſe, God revealed himſelf as indifferent, and ignorant of Mens future Actions, all which Particulars we will ſingly prove, by Places of Scripture.

Firſt it appears by the 2*d* Book of *Kings chap.* 3. *v.* 15. that *Eliſha* before he Propheſy'd to *Jehoram*, deſired a Minſtrel to Play before him, and that till he was pleaſed with the Muſic of the Inſtrument he could not, becauſe he was Angry with the King, foretel what ſhould happen; they who are Angry with any Perſon, are apt and inclined to imagin Evil rather then good, but they are miſtaken who ſay God is never revealed to Angry and Melancholly Perſons; for to *Moſes* who was incenſed againſt *Pharaoh*, without the help of any Muſical Inſtrument, God revealed that miſerable Plague of the death of their firſt born, *Exod. chap.* 11. God was revealed to Angry *Cain*, to angry and impatient *Ezechiel* was revealed the miſery and obſtinacy of the *Jews*, *Ezek. chap.* 3. *v.* 14. *Jeremy* ſad and weary of his Life, Propheſy'd

pheſy'd the Captivity of the *Jews*, ſo that *Joſiah* would not conſult him, but ſent to a Woman *Hilkiah* the Propheteſs, to whoſe milder diſpoſition the mercy of God was more likely to be revealed 2*d* Book of the *Chron. chap.* 24. *v.* 22. *Michiah* never Propheſy'd any good to *Ahab* (as did ſome other *Prophets* in the 1*ſt* Book of the *Kings chap.* 20. *v.* 13.) but all his Life time Propheſy'd Evil; as plainly appears in the 1*ſt* Book of the *Kings*, *chap.* 22. *v.* 8. and more plainly in the 2*d.* Book of *Chron. chap.* 18. *v.* 7. the *Prophets* therefore in reſpect of the different temperament of their Body, inclined to ſome Revelations more then to others. The Stile alſo of Propheſy, differed according to the Eloquence of every *Prophet*; the Propheſies of *Ezekiel* and *Amos* are Written in a lower and leſs Elegant Stile, then thoſe of *Iſaiah* and *Nahum*; and if any who underſtand the *Hebrew* Tongue, deſire to inquire narrowly into theſe things, let them compare ſome Chapters one with another of diverſe *Prophets* upon the ſame Subject, and they ſhall find a great deal of difference in the Stile: compare the firſt Chapter of the Courtier *Iſaiah*, from the 11*th verſ.* to the 20*th*, with the 5*th chap.* of the *Herdſman Amos*, from the 21*th* to the 24*th verſe*, compare the Order and Reaſons of the Pro-

phesy of *Jeremy*, which he wrote *chap.* the 49*th* at *Edom*; with the Order and Reasons of *Obadiah*: compare the 40*th chap.* of *Isai. v.* 19, 20. and his 44*th chap.* from *verse* the 8*th*, with the 8*th chap.* 6*th verse* and the 13*th chap.* 2*d. verse*, of the *Prophet Hosea*, if all things be considered, it is very Evident that God had no peculiar Stile of speaking, but according to the Learning and Capacity of the *Prophet*, it was either Elegant, Concise, Sharp, Rude, Prolix or Obscure: Prophetical Representations and *Hieroglyphicks* were various, tho' they signify'd the same thing: for the Glory of God leaving the Temple, was otherwise represented to *Isaiah*, then it was to *Ezekiel*; the *Rabbines* would have both representations to be the same, and that *Ezekiel* being a Country Man, extraordinarily admired his own; and therefore described it with all its Circumstances: but unless the *Rabbines* were assured by Faithful Tradition the thing was so indeed, we are not bound to believe them; for *Isaiah* saw *Seraphims* with six Wings, and *Ezekiel* Beasts with four, *Isaiah* saw God clothed and sitting upon a Throne, *Ezekiel* saw him like Fire, both of them without doubt saw God as each was wont to imagin Representations also varyed, not only in their manner and form, but in their clearness

clearneſs and perſpicuity ; for the Repreſentations made to *Zachary* were ſo obſcure, that they could not be underſtood by the *Prophet* himſelf without Explication, as appears by the Story ; and thoſe of *Daniel*, tho' explain'd, were not underſtood by him, which happened not in Reſpect of the difficulty of the thing revealed (for it concerned Human Affairs, which exceed not the bounds of Human Capacity but only as they are future) but becauſe *Daniel* was not ſo well able to Propheſy waking, as in his ſleep ; which appears by his being ſo terrify'd in the beginning of the Revelation, that he was ſcarce able to ſtand, and therefore through weakneſs of imagination and want of ſtrength, things were ſo obſcurely Repreſented to him, that he could not underſtand them, tho' they were Expounded, and here it is to be obſerved, that the Wonders which *Daniel* heard were only imaginary, and therefore being at that time ſo much troubled, it is no wonder that he could not underſtand by words which he ſo confuſedly and obſcurely imagin'd, but they that ſay God would not clearly reveal the matter to *Daniel*, ſeem not to have read the words of the Angel, who ſaid expreſly, *Dan. chap.* 10. *v.* 14. *Now am I come to make thee underſtand what ſhall befal thy People in*

the latter days, &c. thoſe things therefore remain'd obſcure, becauſe at that time there was no Man found, who ſo much excell'd in the ſtrength and Power of imagination, as to have a clearer Revelation made to him. Laſtly the *Prophets* to whom it was revealed that God would take away *Eliah*, perſwaded *Eliſha* that he was only to be Tranſlated to ſome other place, where he might be found by them; which Evidently proves that they did not rightly underſtand Gods Revelation, there is no need of being larger upon theſe Particulars; for nothing is more manifeſt in Scripture, then that God did beſtow upon ſome *Prophets*, a much greater Portion of the Gift of Propheſy, then he did upon others; but that Propheſy and Repreſentations differ'd, according to the Opinions which the *Prophets* maintain'd, and that *Prophets* were prejudiced with different, yea contrary, Opinions (I mean concerning things meerly Speculative; but as to things relating to honeſty and good manners, we ought to think otherwiſe) I will more exactly and fully prove, becauſe 'tis a matter of greater moment, and from thence will conclude, that Propheſy never left the *Prophets* more Learned, but left them in the Opinions wherewith they were prepoſſeſt, and for that reaſon in things meerly Specu-

Speculative, no Man is obliged to believe them.

Many men have very unadviſedly perſwaded themſelves, that the Prophets knew all things, within the compaſs of Human Underſtanding, and tho' ſome places of Scripture tell us plainly, that the Prophets did not know ſome things; yet they are rather willing to confeſs, they do not underſtand thoſe places of Scripture, then yeild the Prophets were Ignorant of any thing; or elſe they endeavour ſo to wreſt the Words of Scripture, that they would have it ſay, that which it doth not mean. If either of theſe be lawful, then Farewel to all Scripture, for in vain do we endeavour to prove any thing by Scripture, if thoſe things which are moſt clear in it, ſhall be reckon'd amongſt thoſe that are obſcure and unintelligible, orelſe ſhall be interpreted as we pleaſe. (For example) nothing is more plain then that *Joſuah*, and perhaps he that wrote the Book of *Joſuah*, did belive; that the Sun moved about the Earth, that the Earth had no motion, and that the Sun for ſome time ſtood ſtill: Yet many becauſe they will not allow of any mutation in the Heavens, ſo expound that Place, that it ſhall not ſeem to imply any ſuch thing; but others, who think themſelves better *Phyloſophers*, becauſe they believe

the Eatrh moves, and the Sun ſtands ſtill, or at leaſt moves not about the Earth, do with might and main, endeavour to wreſt the Proof of their Opinion, out of the ſame Scripture againſt its plain Words: Indeed at theſe Men, I much wonder, is any Man obliged to believe, that *Joſuah* a Souldier was perfectly skill'd in *Aſtronomy*? and that a Miracle could not be revealed to him, or that the Light of the Sun, could not remain longer above the *Horizon* then ordinary, unleſs *Joſuah* underſtood the Cauſe thereof; both ſeem to me ridiculous, and I had rather plainly ſay, that *Joſuah* did not know the true Cauſe of that continuing Light, and that all the Army with him did think, that the Sun had adiuvrual motion about the Earth, and that it's ſtanding ſtill that particular Day was the true Cauſe of its longer ſhining; but did not underſtand, that the great abundance of *Hail*, which the 11*th*. *Verſe* of the 10*th*. *chap*. of *Joſuah* ſays, was then in the Region of the *Air*, might cauſe a greater refraction of Light then ordinary, or ſome other thing of like Nature, which is not our Buſineſs here to inquire. In like manner according to the Capacity of *Iſaiah*, a Sign was given by the Shadow's going back upon the *Dyal* of *Ahaz*, becauſe his Opinion was, that the *Sun* moved and not the *Earth*;

and

and for *Parhelij* perhaps, he never dreamt of any ſuch thing, which we may without any ſcruple maintain, for the *Sign* might really happen, and be foretold to the *King*, though the Prophet were ignorant of the true Cauſe thereof: The ſame may be ſaid of *Solomon's* Building, that if all the meaſures and Proportions of it were revealed by *God*, they were revealed according to *Solomon's* Capacity and Opinion, for ſeeing we are not bound to believe that *Solomon* was an exact *Mathematician*, we may lawfully affirm, that he knew not what proportion the *Diameter* of a *Circle* ought to bear to the *Peripheria* or *Circumference*, but thought with the common ſort of Workmen, that it ſhould be as three to one; but if it be lawful to ſay, that we do not underſtand the Text in the *1ſt.* Book of *Kings*, *chap.* 7. *v.* 23. Truly I know not what we can underſtand from Scripture, ſince there the Building is ſimply and hiſtorically related; if it be lawful to ſuppoſe the Scripture meant otherwiſe, but, for ſome Reaſon to us unknown, would write in that manner, what can follow but a total overthrow of all Scripture? and then there is nothing ſo abſurd or wicked, which *Malice* can invent, that may not under Scripture Authority be countenanced and committed; but what we maintain ſavors not

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of Impiety, for *Solomon*, *Isaiah*, *Joshua* &c. tho' Prophets, were Men subject to Human Infirmities. The drowning of all Mankind by a Deluge, was revealed to *Noah* according to his capacity, for he thought no Part of the World was inhabited but *Palestine*, and the Prophets without any prejudice to their Piety, might be, yea were Ignorant, not only of things of this Nature, but also, of Matters of greater consequence, for they discovered very little of the Divine Attributes, but had mean and Vulgar Opinions of *God*, to which their Revelations were accommodated; as by many Testimonies of Scripture shall be proved, so that we may plainly see, they were not so much commended for the Excellencies and Sublimity of their Knowledge, as for their Piety and constancy of Mind.

Adam was the first Man to whom God revealed himself: Yet he knew not that *God* was Omnipresent and Omniscient; for he hid himself from *God* and endeavour'd to excuse his *Sin* to *God*, as if he had been before a Man; therefore *God* was revealed to him according to his Opinion and Capacity, that is, as one who was not every where, and as one Ignorant of *Adam's* Sin; For *Adam* heard, or seemed to hear God walking in the Garden, calling and asking *Adam* where art thou? Asking likewise because

cauſe *Adam* was aſhamed, whether he had eaten of the *forbidden Tree*? *Adam* therefore knew no other Attribute of God, then that he was the maker of all things. God was revealed to *Cain* according to his Capacity (that is) as one ignorant of Human Actions, nor did he need any higher Knowledge of God to repent of his Sin. To *Laban* God revealed himſelf, as the God of *Abraham*, becauſe *Laban* believed that every Nation had a peculiar God, as appears *Gen. chap.* 31. *v.* 29. Where he ſaith to *Jacob*, *the God of your Father ſpoke to me Yeſternight.* *Abraham* was ignorant of God's Vbiquity and Preſcience; for as ſoon as he heard the Sentence againſt *Sodom*, he prayed that God would not execute it, till he knew whether all deſerved the Puniſhment, *Gen. chap.* 18*th. v.* 24. *Peradventure there may be found Fifty righteous within the City.* Nor was God otherwiſe revealed to him, for in *Abraham's* imagination God ſaid, *verſe.* 21*th. I will go down now and ſee whether they have done according to the Cry of it, which is come unto me, and if not, I will know.* God's Teſtimony of *Abraham* in *Gen. chap.* 12. *v.* 19. Speaks of nothing but *Abraham's* Obedience, and that he would command his Children, and his Houſhold after him to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Judgment and Juſtice; but

but ſays nothing of any extraordinary knowledge or Conceptions, that he had of God. *Moſes* did not perfectly know that God was Omniſcient, and that Human Actions were govern'd by his Decrees; for tho' God told him, *Exod. chap.* 3. *v.* 8. That the *Iſraelites* would hearken to his Voice, yet *Moſes* doubted and ſaid in the 1*ſt. verſe* of the 4*th. chapter. What if they will not believe me nor hearken to my Voice?* And therefore God was revealed to him, as indifferent and ignorant of Mens future Actions, for he gave unto him two Signs and ſaid, *Exod. chap.* 4. *v.* 8, 9. *And if it ſhall come to paſs they will not believe thee, nor hearken to the Voice of the firſt Sign, they will believe the Voice of the latter Sign, but if they will not believe the latter Sign, then take of the Water of the River* &c. And indeed if a Man will without prejudice conſider the Opinions of *Moſes*, it will clearly appear, that *Moſes* thought *God* a *Being* that always was, is, and ever ſhall be; and therefore called him *Jehovah*, which in *Hebrew* expreſſeth thoſe three times of exiſting; but of his Nature he declared no more, then that he was very merciful, kind and very jealous, as appears in many Places of the *Pentateuch*. He believed and taught alſo, that this Being was ſo different from all other Beings, that he could not be expreſt by the likeneſs of any other viſible Thing;

Thing; that he was inviſible, not becauſe he thought beholding him was in it ſelf impoſſible; but only in reſpect of Human Frailty, he thought alſo that this Being was in regard of his own Power, ſingle and but one, he allow'd that there were other Beings, which by the Order and Command of God, were God's Subſtitutes and Vicegerents (that is) Beings to whom God gave Power and Authority to govern Nations, to provide for and take care of them; but *Moſes* declared the Being, which the *Jews* were bound to worſhip, to be the moſt high God (that is) in the *Hebrew* Phraſe, the God of all Gods; therefore *Moſes* in his Song, *Exod. chap.* 15. *v.* 11. ſaith, *who is like unto thee O Lord amongſt the Gods!* and *Jethro Exod. chap.* 18. *v.* 11. ſaith, *Now I know that the Lord is greater then all Gods* (that is) I muſt acknowledge with *Moſes*, that *Jehovah* is greater then all Gods, and of Singular Power: but whether *Moſes* believed, that the Beings which were God's Vicegerents were created by God, may be doubted, ſince he ſaid nothing (that we know) of their Creation or Original. Another of *Moſes's* Doctrines was, that this being out of a *Chaos*, *Gen. chap.* 1*ſt. v.* 2. brought this Viſible World into Form and Order, furniſhed Nature with the Seeds of all things, and therefore hath abſolute Power and Authority over all things, as it is

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Deut. chap. 10. *v.* 14, 15. And by that absolute Power, choſe the *Jewiſh* Nation for himſelf, and appointed a Particular Place of the Earth for their Habitation, *Deut. chap.* 4. *v.* 19. and *chap.* 32. *v.* 8. But other Nations and Countries, he left to the care of other Gods ſubſtituted by him, and therefore God was called the God of *Iſrael*, and the God of *Jeruſalem*, 2*d.* Book of *Chron. chap.* 32. *v.* 19. And other Gods were called the Gods of the Nations: For this Reaſon the Jews believed, that the Country which God choſe for them, required a particular and different worſhip of God, from that of other Countries, nor would they ſuffer the worſhip of other Gods, or any worſhip proper to other Countries to be exerciſed amongſt them, it was believed that the People whom the King of *Aſſyria* brought into the Country of the *Jews*, were devoured by *Lyons*, becauſe they knew not the manner of the worſhip of the God of the Land, 2*d.* Book of Kings *chap.* 17. *v.* 24, 25. It is the Opinion of *Aben Ezra*, that *Jacob* upon this Ground, when he was about returning into his own Country, commanded his Sons to put away the Gods of the Land in which they were; and prepare themſelves for a new Way of Worſhip, *Gen. chap.* 35. *v.* 23. *David* told *Saul*, becauſe he was by Perſecution

cution compell'd to forſake his Country, that he was driven out from the Inheritance of the Lord, and ſent to ſerve other Gods 1ſt. Book of *Sam. chap.* 26. *v.* 19. Laſtly, *Moſes* believed that God had his Habitation in the Heavens, *Deut. chap.* 33. *v.* 26. Which was a frequent Opinion among the Heathen. Now if we carefully obſerve the Revelations of *Moſes*, we ſhall find them fitted and ſuited to thoſe Conceptions and Opinions which he had of God: becauſe he believed that God's Nature was Gracious, Merciful, Longſuffering *&c.* Therefore according to this Opinion, and theſe Attributes was God revealed to him, *Exod. chap.* 34. *v.* 6, 7. Where it is declared why God appeared to him: alſo *Exod. chap.* 20. *v.* 4, 5. In *Exod. chap.* 33. *v.* 18. We read that *Moſes* deſired to ſee God, but becauſe *Moſes*, as hath been already ſaid, had formed in his imagination no Likeneſs or Figure of God, and as I have already ſhewed, God was not revealed to the Prophets, but according to the diſpoſition of their Fancy and Imagination, therefore God appeared to him under no Image or Similitude, and the Reaſon of it was, becauſe 'twas repugnant and contrary to the Imagination of *Moſes*; but other Prophets, *Iſaiah*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* teſtify that they ſaw God. *Moſes* was anſwered

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byGod in the 20*th Verſe* of the 33. *Chap.* of *Exod.* thou canſt not ſee my Face; and becauſe *Moſes* believed that God was viſible (that is it imply'd no contradiction in the Divine Nature to be ſo) elſe he had never made ſuch a requeſt, therefore God alſo anſwer'd, no Man ſhall ſee my Face and live, giving a Reaſon ſuitable to *Moſes*'s Opinion; for God did not ſay that his Divine Nature was in it ſelf inviſible, and impoſſible to be ſeen; as indeed it is, but that it could not be ſeen becauſe of human Weakneſs and Frailty. After the *Iſraelites* had worſhipt the Golden Calf, that God might reveal to *Moſes* the *Iſraelites* ſhould become like other Nations, God tells him, *Exod. Chap.* 33. *v.* 2, 3. that he would ſend an Angel (that is a Being) who inſtead of the ſupreme Being, ſhould take care of the *Iſraelites*; but that he himſelf would be no more in the midſt of them: and from this *Moſes* was to conclude, that the *Iſraelites* were thenceforth not to be beloved by God any more then other Nations, who were committed to the care of Angels or other Beings, as appears by the 16*th Verſe* of the Chapter. *Laſtly*, becauſe *Moſes* believed that God dwelt in Heaven, therefore was God revealed as deſcending from Heaven upon Mount *Sinai*, and *Moſes* that he might

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ſpeak with God aſcended the *Mount*, which he needed not to have done, had he thought God to be in all places: The *Iſraelites* knew very little of God, tho' he was revealed to them; as was ſufficiently manifeſted, by their beſtowing on a Calf, the Honour and Worſhip due to God; and by ſaying to that Calf, *theſe be thy Gods, O Iſrael, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.* Nor is it to be believed, that Men accuſtomed to the Superſtitions of *Egypt*, Ignorant and broken to the Yoke of a tedious Bondage, ſhould have any right Underſtanding of God; or that *Moſes* ſhould teach them any thing more, then a peculiar manner and way of living; not inſtructing them as a Philoſopher, to make living well their free and voluntary choice; but as a Legiſlator compelling them by the Commands and Power of Law: So that a good Life, the Love and Service of God, was to them rather Servitude then true Liberty, or the Grace and Gift of God: for *Moſes* Commanded them to love God and keep his Law; that they might acknowledge their deliverance out of *Egypt* to be by God, he terrifyed them with threatnings in caſe they Tranſgreſt the Law, and promis'd them many Bleſſings, if they carefully obſerved it; So that he dealt with the *Iſraelites*, as Parents uſe to

do with Children void of Reaſon, which is an Evidence, that they were ignorant, how Excellent a thing Vertue is, and what was true happineſs. *Jonas* thought he could fly from the preſence of God, which imply'd, that he alſo believed God had ſubſtituted other Powers, to take care of thoſe Countries and Nations which were not within the Territories of *Judea*, in all the Old Teſtament, we read of no Perſon who ſpoke ſo rationally of God as *Solomon*, who for natural Knowledge excell'd all the Men of his time, and therefore thought himſelf above the Law (which was only given to thoſe who wanted the dictates of Reaſon and natural Underſtanding) and ſlighted the obſervance of thoſe Laws, which particularly concern'd him as he was King, and conſiſted in three Particulars, as may be ſeen, *Deut. Chap.* 17. *v.* 16, 17. he was indeed to blame in breaking thoſe Laws, and did not do like a Philoſopher, when he deliver'd himſelf up to pleaſure and ſenſuality; yet we read in *Eccleſiaſtes*, he declared all the Goods of Fortune to be Vanity, and that nothing is to be ſo highly prized as Wiſdom and Underſtanding, and no puniſhment equal to a Mans being a Fool, *Prov. Chap.* 17. But let us return to the *Prophets*, of whoſe differing Opinions we have taken notice, the

the *Rabbines* who have left us the Books of the *Prophets* now extant, found the Opinions of *Ezekiel* ſo contrary to thoſe of *Moſes*, as may be ſeen in the Treatiſe of the Sabbath (*Chap. 1ſt fol.* 13. *page* 2*d.*) that they were near reſolving not to receive the Book of *Ezekiel* for Canonical, and had conceal'd it, if a certain Perſon called *Hananiah*, had not undertaken to expound it, which ſome report he did with great Labour and Study; ſo that 'tis not certain whether it were a Commentary he wrote, and was perhaps loſt, or that he changed and gloſſed upon *Ezekiels* words and diſcourſes, according to his own fancy; however it was, the 18*th Chapter* of *Ezekiel* doth not ſeem to agree with the 34 *Chap.* of *Exod. v.* 7; nor with the 32 *Chap.* of *Jeremy v.* 18. *Samuel* believed that when God had decreed any thing, he never repented or changed that decree, 1*ſt* Book of *Sam. Chap.* 14. *v.* 29; *Saul* when he repented of his Sin and deſired to worſhip God; *Samuel* told him God would not change his Decree, but the contrary was revealed to *Jeremy*, for when ever God decreed good or evil to any Nation, if Men became either better or worſe, before the Execution of the Sentence, God did accordingly alter his decrees, *Jerem. Chap.* 18. *v.* 8, 10. the *Prophet Joel* beleived that

God repented of the Evil which he at any time decreed, *Jo. Chap.* 2. *v.* 13. in the 4*th Chap.* of *Gen. v.* 7. it clearly appears, that it is in Mans Power to overcome Evil Temptations, and to live well by what God ſaid to *Cain*, who notwithſtanding as we find in Scripture and in *Joſephus*, never ſubdued his Paſſions, by the forecited Text in *Jeremy*, we may conclude that God changeth his purpoſes either of doing good or evil, according to Mens living well or wickedly; yet on the contrary, St. *Paul* teacheth nothing more plainly, then that Men have no Power over themſelves, againſt the Temptations and Luſts of the Fleſh, but by the particular Mercy and Election of God; as may be ſeen in the 9*th Chapter* to the *Romans* from the 10*th Verſe* onward; in the 3*d Chap. v.* 3*d*, where he asketh whether God be unrighteous in taking vengeance, he Corrects himſelf in ſpeaking after that manner like a Man.

From what hath been alledged, we have ſufficiently proved what we propoſed, namely that God fitted and ſuted his *Revelations* according to the Capacity and Opinions of the *Prophets*; and that they might be and indeed were, ignorant of things meerly ſpeculative, which did not pertain to Charity and a godly Life, that the *Prophets* were alſo of very different Opinions

Opiniors, and conſequently in the Knowledge of Natural and Spiritual things, we are not to rely and ground our ſelves upon them: We conclude then, that we are not bound to believe any thing more from the *Prophets*, then the end and ſubſtance of what they revealed; and that in other things, it is free for a Man to believe as he thinks beſt, (for example) *Cains Revelation* teacheth us, that God did admoniſh him to live well, which was the intent end, and ſubſtance of the *Revelation*; but it doth not declare to us the freedom of Mans Will, or any other Philoſophical Matter; therefore tho' in the Words and Reaſons of that Admonition, freedom of Will ſeem to be clearly aſſerted, yet 'tis lawful to be of a contrary Opinion, ſince thoſe Words and Reaſons, were only applyed and ſuited to the Capacity of *Cain*. The *Prophet Michaiahs Revelation* only declared, what ſhould be the Event of the Battle between *Ahaband Aram*; and therefore we are only bound to believe that; but whatever elſe was contain'd in that *Revelation* concerning the true and lying Spirit of God; or concerning the Hoſt of Heaven ſtanding on each ſide of God, with other Circumſtances in that *Revelation*; they do not at all concern us, but every one may believe of them as he thinks moſt agree-

able to Reaſon, the ſame may be ſaid of the Reaſons declared to *Job*, for God's having abſolute Power over all things, if it be true that they were a *Revelation*, and that he Writ as an Hiſtorian and not (as ſome believe) like a Poet: they were revealed according to *Jobs* Capacity, for his particular Conviction, but they were not intended as Univerſal Reaſons to convince all Men; nor are we to determin otherwiſe of the Reaſons uſed by Chriſt, to convince the *Phariſees* of their Ignorance and Obſtinacy, and to perſwade his Diſciples to live righteouſly; all thoſe Reaſons were accommodated to the Opinions and Principles of the Perſons to whom they were urged (for example) when Chriſt ſaid to the *Phariſees*, *Mat. Chap.* 12. *v.* 26. *If Satan caſt out Satan he is divided againſt himſelf, how then ſhall his Kingdom ſtand*, here Chriſt convinceth the *Phariſees*, from their own Principles and Opinions, who ſaid he caſt out Devils by *Belzebub* the Prince of Devils; but we ought not to conclude, that Chriſts Words are an abſolute proof, that there are Devils and a Kingdom of Devils. So alſo when he ſaid to his Diſciples, *Matth. Chap.* 18. *v.* 10. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little Ones, for I ſay unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father*

ther which is in Heaven, by theſe Words Chriſt taught nothing more, then that they ought not to be proud, or deſpiſe any one, whatever elſe was ſaid, was only the better to perſwade his Diſciples, the ſame may be ſaid of the Signs and Diſcourſes of the Apoſtles; nor need we ſay more of this Subject, becauſe it would be extreamly tedious to Quote all thoſe places of Scripture which are Writen only *Ad hominem*, or according to *Mens* Capacity; and with a great prejudice to Philoſophy, are maintain'd to be Divine Doctrines. 'Tis ſufficient to have mention'd theſe few general ones, the Curious Reader may himſelf examine the reſt; but ſeeing all thoſe things which I have ſpoken concerning *Prophets* and *Propheſy*, do directly concern the thing I aimed at, which was to divide Philoſophy from Theology; yet becauſe I have only touched upon the queſtion generally, I will now in the following Chapter, inquire whether the Gift of *Propheſy* were peculiar only to the *Jews*, or common to all Nations? And alſo what is to be underſtood by the calling of the *Jews*.

CHAP. III.

Of the calling of the Jews, *and whether the Gift of Propheſy were peculiar only to the* Jews.

EVery Mans proſperity and true happineſs conſiſts only in the fruition of good, but not in the glory, that he alone and no other Perſon enjoys that good; for whoever thinks himſelf the more happy, becauſe it is well with him when it is not ſo with other Men; or becauſe he is more fortunate and proſperous then others, is ignorant what is true felicity and beatitude; and the joy which ariſeth from ſuch a conceit is Childiſh, and ſavors of an envious Evil Mind (for example) Mans true beatitude and felicity, conſiſts only in Wiſdom and the knowledge of Truth, but not in his being wiſer then other Men, or that other Men want true knowledge; for that adds not at all

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to his Wiſdom, which is his true happineſs, he therefore that rejoyceth in being happyer then other Men, takes Pleaſure in their misfortune, and is an envious Evil Man; and he that is ſo, never knew true Wiſdom or the Peace of a good Life; ſeeing therefore, that the Scripture for the better perſwading the *Jews* to obey the Law, ſaith *Deut. chap.* 10 *v.* 19. *that God choſe them above all People, and was nigher to them then to all other Nations Deut. chap.* 4. *v.* 7. *that he gave them Statutes and Laws more righteous and juſt, then he did to other Nations*, as it is in the 8*th Verſe* of the ſame *chap.* and laſtly, *that God made himſelf more known to them then to other People*, as it is in the 32*th verſe* of the 4*th chap.* All this was ſpoken according to the capacity and underſtanding, of thoſe that did not know what was true bleſſedneſs, as we have ſhewn in the foregoing Chapter, and as *Moſes* himſelf, teſtifies in *Deut. chap.* 9. *v.* 6, 7. for the *Jews* had not been leſs bleſſed, tho' God had equally called all Men to Salvation, nor had God been leſs gracious to them, tho' he had been as nigh to other Nations; their Laws had not been leſs righteous, nor they leſs wiſe, tho' the ſame had been preſcribed to all other People, and the Miracles done among them had not leſs

declared

declared Gods Power, tho' the like had been wrought for other Nations; nor had the *Jews* been the leſs obliged to ſerve and Worſhip God, tho' God had equally given to all other Men the ſame Gifts which he beſtow'd on them. God's ſaying to *Solomon* (in the 1*ſt* Book of *Kings chap.* 3. *v.* 12.) that none after him ſhould be ever like him for underſtanding, ſeems to be only a manner of ſpeaking to declare the excellency of *Solomons* Wiſdom; what ever the words mean, yet we ought not to believe, that to increaſe *Solomons* happineſs, God promis'd never to make any Man ſo wiſe as he; for that would not at all have made *Solomons* Wiſdom greater, neither would a wiſe King have given God the leſs thanks, tho' God had ſaid, he would beſtow as much Wiſdom upon all other Men.

But tho' we ſay, that *Moſes* in the forecited places of the Pentateuch, ſpake according to the Capacity of the *Jews*; yet we cannot deny but that God preſcribed thoſe Laws of the Pentateuch to the *Jews* only, that he ſpoke only to them, and that no other Nation ever ſaw ſuch miracles as were wrought amongſt them, all that I intend is, that *Moſes* ſpake after ſuch a manner, and made uſe of ſuch arguments, the better to convince their Childiſh underſtandings,

derſtandings, and bind them the faſter to the ſervice and worſhip of God. Laſtly, we will ſhew, that the *Jews* did not excel other Nations in knowledge or Piety, but in ſome other thing; or (that I may with Scripture ſpeak to their Capacity) God did not make choiſe of the *Jews* above other Nations, that their knowledge might be more ſublime, or their Lives more righteous then other Peopl's, but for another end and purpoſe; and what that was, we will in order declare.

But before I begin, I will in few words explain, what I mean in that which follows, by Gods diſpoſing and direction, what by Gods external and internal aſſiſtance, what by Gods calling or Election. And Laſtly, what I intend by fortune, I take Gods diſpoſing or direction, to be the fixed order and immutable courſe of Nature, or the Concatenation of Natural things and cauſes; for we have already ſhewn, that the univerſal Laws of Nature, whereby all things are done and determin'd, are nothing elſe but Gods eternal decrees, which imply eternal verity and neceſſity: therefore whether we ſay, that all things are done and brought to paſs, according to the Laws of Nature, or by the ordination and decree of God, we ſay but one and the ſame thing; becauſe the

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Power of all Natural beings, is nothing elſe, but the Power of God by which all things were ordered and done, it therefore follows, that whatever Man, who is a part of Nature, doth for the preſervation of his being, or whatever Nature without any endeavour of his, offers him for that end; it is offered by the divine Power, operating either by human Nature, or by things without it: ſo that whatever human Nature can perform by its own Power for ſelf preſervation, that may be truly called Gods internal aſſiſtance, and that benefit and advantage which Man receives from the Power of external cauſes, may be juſtly termed Gods external help: which fully explains what is to be underſtood by Gods calling or Election; for ſince no Man can do any thing but by the predeterminate order of Nature, that is according to Gods eternal direction and decree, it is a neceſſary conſequence, that no Man chuſeth for himſelf any way or manner of living, or effecteth any thing, but by the particular Will and Calling of God, who choſe him before others, ſo to live, and ſo to Act. Laſtly by fortune nothing elſe is to be underſtood, but Gods diſpoſing and directing human Affairs, by external and unexpected Cauſes. Theſe things premiſed, we return to our firſt purpoſe,

purpoſe, of inquiring what it was, for which the *Jews* are ſaid to be choſen by God before other Nations, and to make it out, I proceed in this manner.

All thoſe things which we can honeſtly and lawfully deſire, may be referred to theſe three Heads. *Firſt*, to know things by their firſt and immediate Cauſes. *Secondly*. to Maſter our Paſſion and affections, and acquire a conſtant habit of vertue, and *Laſtly*, to live in Bodily health and ſafty. The means directly conducing to the two firſt of theſe heads, and which may be conſider'd as prime and efficient cauſes; are contained in human Nature; ſo that the obtaining of them is within our Power, or cheifly depends upon the Laws only of human Nature: and therefore it muſt be concluded, that thoſe gifts are not peculiar to any one Nation, but were always common to all Mankind, unleſs we can perſwade our ſelves, that Nature firſt procreated diverſe kinds of Men; but the means which conduce to our living in health and ſafty, conſiſt cheifly in things external, and are therefore called the gifts and goods of Fortune, becauſe they depend upon the diſpoſition of outward cauſes, of which we are altogether ignorant, ſo that in this particular, the Fool and the wiſe Man is alike happy or unhappy, yet

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as to ſecure living and to avoid the injuries both of Men and Beaſts, human wiſdom and diligence may contribute very much; reaſon and experience teach us, that to live in ſafty, there is no way ſo ready and certain, as to form Societies Subject to Laws, to chuſe a convenient part of the Earth for habitation, and to unite every individual Perſon's ſtrength, to preſerve the whole Collective Body: but to the forming and preſerving of Societies, no little wiſdom and diligence is required; and therefore that Society ſhall be more ſecure, more laſting, and leſs Subject to Fortune and Accidents, which is founded and ordered by prudent and careful Men; and on the contrary, thoſe Societies which are formed and govern'd by Men of groſs and mean underſtandings, do for the moſt part depend upon Fortune, and are of no long continuance; but where ſuch a Society ſtands long, it owes its duration not to its own, but to ſome other conduct, and if it overcome great dangers, and the Affairs thereof proſper, it cannot but admire and adore Gods diſpoſing and ordering things (by external and hidden cauſes, when he doth not Act by human Nature and Underſtanding) ſeeing whatever happens to ſuch a Society of Men beyond their Expectation and Opinion, may be counted a Miracle. Nations

Nations therefore are diſtinguiſht one from another, in reſpect of Society and Laws, under which they live and are govern'd; ſo that the *Jewiſh* Nation was not choſen by God before others, in reſpect of their underſtanding and tranquility of mind, but in regard of their aſſociation and Fortune, by which they arriv'd to that government which laſted ſo many Years, it manifeſtly appears by Scripture, that the *Jews* excelled other Nations only in the proſperous management of thoſe Affairs, which concern'd their Living Securely, and that they overcame great dangers only by Gods external Aſſiſtance; but in other things they were but equal to other Nations, and God was alike good to all, it is evident as we have proved in the preceding Chapter, that the *Jews* as to their knowledge, had very vulgar Notions and thoughts of God; and therefore as they were not choſen above others, upon the account of their knowledge; ſo neither were they choſen in reſpect of their vertue and good Life, for in that they were but like other Nations, and but a very few of them were choſen; their calling and election, conſiſted in the temporal felicity and advantages of their government, neither can we perceive, that God promis'd any more to the Patriarchs and

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their ſucceſſors, yea by the Law, nothing elſe was promiſed for a reward to obedience, but the continual proſperity of their Government and ſome other benefits of this Life: in caſe of diſobedience and breach of Covenant, they were threatned with the ruin of the Government, temporal miſery and deſtruction, and no wonder; for the end of all Society and Government, (as hath been already and ſhall hereafter be more fully declared) is to live in Happineſs and Security. But Government cannot ſubſiſt without Laws which every Man muſt obey, for when the Members of a Society refuſe to be govern'd by the Laws, in that very inſtant the Society is diſſolved, and the Government deſtroyed, to the Commonwealth of the *Jews*, nothing elſe could be promiſed for the conſtant Obſervation of their Law, but the ſafety, benefits and conveniences of this Life, and for their Rebellion no other puniſhment was propheſy'd, but the deſtruction of their Government, the Miſeries which would thereupon enſue, and perhaps ſome other Evils which might peculiarly happen to them from the ruin of their Government, which was ſingular and different from others, but of theſe things we need ſay no more at this time, I only add, that the Laws of the

Old

Old Teſtament, were revealed and preſcribed only to the *Jews*, for when God called and choſe them to a particular kind of Society and Government, they were neceſſarily to have ſingular Laws; whether God preſcribed peculiar Laws to other Nations, and revealed himſelf prophetically to their Law-givers, under thoſe attributes which they in their imagination uſed to aſcribe to God, I am not certain; however it appears by Scripture, that other Nations had Governments and particular Laws by the external direction of God, to prove which I will only quote two places, *Gen. chap.* 14. *v.* 18, 19, 20. where it is ſaid, that *Melchiſedech was King of* Salem, *and the prieſt of the moſt high God*, and that he bleſſed *Abraham*, which (as we may ſee *Numb. chap.* 6. *v.* 23.) was the Prieſts Office, and *Abraham* the beloved of God gave to the High Prieſt the tenth part of all his booty; which plainly proves, that before God founded the *Jewiſh* Nation, he conſtituted Kings and Prieſts in *Jeruſalem*, and preſcribed them Laws and Ceremonies: but whether he did it prophetically I cannot affirm, however I am perſwaded, that *Abraham* while he continued there, liv'd religiouſly according to thoſe Laws; for *Abraham* received no particular Religious Rites from God, and yet it is ſaid *Gen. chap.*

26. *v.* 5. that *Abraham* kept the Commandments, Statutes, and Laws of God, which muſt neceſſarily be thoſe of King *Melchiſedch.* Malachy *chap.* 1*ſt. v.* 10, 11. God there reproves the *Jews* ſaying, *who is there even among you that would have ſhut the Doors for nought?* (meaning of the Temple) *neither do ye kindle fire on my Altar for nought, I have no Pleaſure in you ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, neither will I accept an Offering at your hand, for from the Riſing of the Sun to the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered to my name, and a pure offering, for my name ſhall be great among the heathen ſaith the Lord of Hoſts,* which words ſufficiently teſtify unleſs we wreſt their ſenſe, that at that time, the *Jews* were not more beloved of God then other Nations, that God was made known more to other Nations by Miracles, then he was at that time to the *Jews* who then without Miracles, recovered again in part their Government, and that other Nations had Religious Rites and Ceremonies, wherewith God was well pleaſed; but theſe things I paſs by, it being ſufficient for my purpoſe to have ſhewn, that the Election of the *Jews* concerned nothing elſe, but the temporal well fare of their Bodies, their Liberty, Government, or the ways and means

means by which it was erected; conſequently their Laws as they were neceſſary to the Eſtabliſhment of that particular kind of Government, and Laſtly, the manner how thoſe Laws were revealed: but as to all other things, wherein the Happyneſs of Man's Life conſiſts, they were but equal to other Nations. Seeing then the Scripture *Deut. chap.* 4. *v.* 7. Saith, *that no Nation had God ſo nigh unto them as the Jews.* That muſt be underſtood only in Reſpect of the Government, and of that time only in which ſo many Miracles happened; but in Reſpect of Knowledge and Vertue which is true Happyneſs, God (as we have already proved) was equally Gracious to all Men, which is evident in Scripture, for the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *Pſal.* 145. *v.* 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him in Truth*: alſo in the ſame *Pſal. v.* 9. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. Pſal.* 33. *v.* 15. *He faſhioneth Mens Hearts alike.* The meaning of which Expreſſion is, that God gives to all Mankind the ſame Intellect; for among the *Jews*, as 'tis well known, the Heart was believed to be the Seat of the Soul and Underſtanding. It appears *Job chap.* 28. *v.* 28. That the Law preſcribed by God to all Mankind, was to fear the Lord, depart

from evil and to do well, and therefore *Job*, tho' a *Gentile*, was very acceptable to God, and excell'd in Religion and Piety: *Laſtly*, it is plain by the 4*th. chap.* of *Jonah. v.* 21. That God was not only to the *Jews*, but to all *Men*, *Gracious*, *Merciful*, *ſlow to Anger*, *and of great Kindneſs*, which are the Words of *Moſes*, *Exod. chap.* 34. *v.* 6. So that *Jonah* ſaid, he fled to *Tarſhiſh*, becauſe he knew God being *Merciful* and Gracious, would pardon the *Ninevites*, who were *Gentiles*. We then conclude, ſeeing God is equally good to all Mankind, and that the *Jews* were only choſen by God in reſpect of their Society and Government; that every particular *Jew* conſidered as a Perſon out of that Common-weath and Government, had no Gift of God above other Men, nor was there any difference between a *Jew* and a *Gentile*. If God be equally good and gracious to all *Men*, and that the Duty and Office of a Prophet, was not ſo much to inſtruct *Men* in the particular Laws of their Country, as to teach them the Way to good and Vertuous living; there is no doubt but all Nations had their Prophets, and that the Gift of Propheſy was not peculiar to the *Jews*: which is proved by Profane, as well as by Sacred, Hiſtories. Tho' in the Sacred Hiſtories of the Old Teſtament, it doth not plainly appear,

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that other Nations had ſo many Prophets as the *Jews*, or that any *Gentile* Prophet was expreſly ſent by God to other Nations; nothing is to be inferr'd from thence, becauſe the *Jews* only took care, to write the Hiſtory of their own Affairs, and not of other Nations. It is enough that in the Old Teſtament, we find that *Gentiles*, and *Men* uncircumciſed as *Noah*, *Enoch*, *Abimeleck*, and *Balaam* did Propheſy; andthat alſo the *Jewiſh* Prophets, were not only ſent by God to their own People, but likewiſe to other Nations. *Ezekiel* Propheſy'd to all the Nations known in his Time, and *Obadiah*, for ought we know, to none but the *Edomites*. *Jonah* was a Prophet chiefly to the *Ninevites*, *Iſaiah* did not only lament and foretel the Calamities, and Propheſy the Reſtauration of the *Jews*, but alſo of other Nations, for he ſaith *chap.* 16. *v.* 9. *Therefore will I bewail with the weeping of Iazer.* In *chap.* 19. He firſt foretelleth the Calamities, and afterwards the Reſtauration of the *Egyptians*; in the 19, 20, 21, 25. *Verſes*, he tells them God would ſend them a Saviour, and would deliver them, that God ſhould be known to them, and that they ſhould worſhip God by Sacrifices and Oblations; and *Laſtly*, he calls *Egypt* the Bleſſed People of God, all which is very worthy of our Obſervation. *Laſt-*

ſtly, *Jeremy* was not only a Prophet to the *Jews*, but was in Expreſs Terms called the Prophet of the Nations. *Jerem. chap.* 1*ſt. v.* 5. *Before thou cameſt out of the Womb, I ſanctify'd thee, and ordained thee a Prophet to the Nations.* He Prophetically bewayl'd and foretold, the Reſtauration of other Nations, he ſaith, *chap.* 48. *v.* 31. *Therefore will I howl for Moab, I will cry out for all Moab,* and *v.* 36. *Therefore my Heart ſhall ſound for Moab like Pipes.* And afterward foretels the Reſtauration of the *Egyptians*, the *Amonites* and *Elamites.* Without queſtion other Nations had their Prophets as well as the *Jews*, tho' the Scripture mentions only *Balaam*, to whom was revealed what ſhould befal other Nations, as well as the *Jews*; Yet we are not to believe, that *Balaam* never Propheſy'd till he was ſent for by *Balaack*; it appears by the ſtory, that he was Famous for Propheſy, and other Divine Endowments; for *Balaack* ſaid to him *Numb. chap.* 22. *v.* 6. *I know, he whom thou bleſſeſt is bleſſed, and he whom thou curſeſt is curſed.* So that he had the ſame Power and Vertue, which God *Gen. chap.* 12. *v.* 3. beſtowed upon *Abraham. Balaam* alſo anſwers *Balaack*'s Meſſengers, as one accuſtomed to Propheſy; for he bid them ſtay all Night till the Word of God were revealed to him; when he Propheſyed, (that is)

is) made known what was truly the Mind and Will of God, he uſed to ſay theſe Words. *He hath ſaid, who heard the Words of God, and knew the Knowledge of the moſt high, who ſaw the Viſion of the Almighty falling into a Trance, but having his Eyes open.* Laſtly, after he had by Gods Command bleſſed the *Iſraelites*, he began as he was wont to Propheſy of other Nations, foretelling what ſhould happen to them in time to come, all which fully proves, that he had been always a *Prophet*, or had often *Propheſyed*; and what is further to be obſerved, that he likewiſe had that which made the *Prophets* certain of the truth of their Propheſy, namely an honeſt and good Mind, for he did not as *Balaack* thought, curſe and bleſs whom he would, but only thoſe that were to be bleſſed or curſt as God pleaſed; therefore he anſwered *Balaack, if Balaack would give me his Houſe full of Gold, I cannot go beyond the Commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own Mind, but what the Lord ſaith that will I ſpeak*; as for Gods being angry with him, it was no more then happen'd to *Moſes*, when by Gods Command he went into *Egypt*, *Exod. Chap.* 4. *v.* 24. where it is ſaid, the Lord met him and ſought to kill him, his taking Mony to Propheſy was no more then was done by *Samuel*, 1*ſt*

Book of *Sam. chap.* 9. *v.* 7, 8. St. *Peter* in his 2*d Epiſtle Chap.* 2. *v.* 15, 16. and *Jude* in the 11*th Verſe* of his Epiſtle tells us, in what *Balaam* ſinned, but what ſaith the 20*th Verſe* of the 7*th Chap.* of *Eccleſiaſtes*, *No Man ſo juſt upon Earth who always doth good and never Sins*: certainly the Prayers of *Balaam* were very prevalent, ſeeing 'tis ſo often recorded in Scripture, that for a Teſtimony of God's Mercy to the *Iſraelites*, he refuſed to hear *Balaam*, and turned his Curſes into a Bleſſing, as we may ſee, *Deut. Chap.* 23. *v.* 5. *Joſh. Chap.* 24. *v.* 10. and *Neh. Chap.* 13. *v.* 2. So that without queſtion he was a Perſon very acceptable to God, who is never moved with the Prayers or Curſes of wicked Men. Seeing therefore that *Balaam* was a true Prophet, and that notwithſtanding, *Joſhua Chap.* 4. *v.* 22. calls him a Southſayer, yet that name was ſometimes taken in a good Senſe, and thoſe that the Gentiles called Augurs or Diviners, were true Prophets, and thoſe whom the Scripture Condemns for falſe Diviners, were they that deceived the Nations, as the falſe Prophets did the *Jews*, which clearly appears out of other places of Scripture. We therefore conclude that the Gift of Propheſy, was not peculiar to the *Jews*, but common to all Nations; but the *Phariſees* zealouſly maintain

tain the contrary, and ſay that the *Jews* only had that Divine Gift, and that other Nations did foretel future Events (what will not Superſtition invent) by I know not what Diabolical Power and Arts: the place of greateſt Authority in the Old Teſtament, which the *Phariſees* quote for the Confirmation of their Opinion, is *Exod. Chap.* 33. *v.* 16. where *Moſes* ſaith to God, *Wherein ſhall it be known here that I and thy People have found Grace in thy ſight: is it not in that thou goeſt with us, ſo ſhall we be ſeperated I and thy People from all the People that are upon the face of the Earth.* Hence the *Phariſees* infer that *Moſes* Petitioned God, to be preſent with the *Jews*, that he would prophetically reveal himſelf to them, and that he would not grant that Favour to any other Nation, certainly it is very ridiculous to think, *Moſes* envyed the preſence of God to other Nations and People, or that he durſt deſire any ſuch thing, but the truth of the Caſe was, that after *Moſes* knew the obſtinate diſpoſition and Rebellious Mind of his Nation, he clearly ſaw that without very great Miracles, and the particular external Aſſiſtance of God, he ſhould never perfect what he had begun; but that they muſt all neceſſarily periſh without ſuch Aſſiſtance; and therefore that it might appear God would

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preſerve them, he prayed for that extraordinary external Aid from God, for he ſaith, *Exod. Chap.* 34. *v.* 9. *If now I have found Grace in thy ſight, O Lord, let my Lord I pray thee go among us for it is a ſtiffnecked People*, the reaſon therefore why *Moſes* deſired that particular external help from God, was becauſe the People were ſtubborn and diſobedient, and that *Moſes* deſired no more then this external Aſſiſtance, appears evidently by Gods Anſwer, *v.* 10. of the ſame *Chapter*, *Behold I make my Covenant before all thy People, I will do Miracles ſuch as have not been done in all the Earth nor in any Nation:* So that *Moſes* here treateth of the Election of the *Jews* only in that Senſe I have explain'd it, and requeſted no other thing of God, but I find another Text in *Paul's Epiſtle* to the *Romans*, *Chap.* 3. *v.* 12. which much more ſatisfies me, tho' he ſeem to be of a different Opinion from mine; for he ſaith, *what Advantages hath the* Jew *or what profit is there in Circumciſion? much every way, chiefly becauſe unto them were Committed the Oracles of God.* But if we carefully conſider the Doctrine which *Paul* chiefly deſign'd to maintain, we ſhall find it ſo far from contradicting mine, that it perfectly agrees with it; for he ſaith, *v.* 29*th.* of the ſame *Chap. Is he the God of the* Jews *only, is he not alſo of the Gentiles?* And chap. 2. v. 25, 26. he ſaith,

ſaith, *if the Circumciſed break the Law, Circumciſion is made Uncircumciſion, and if the Uncircumciſed keep the Righteouſneſs of the Law, ſhall not his Uncircumciſion be counted for Circumciſion?* He further ſaith, *v.* 9. of the ſame *Chapter*, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were all under Sin, but there can be no Sin where there is no Commandment or Law. 'Tis evident that the Law was abſolutely reveal'd to all Mankind (as I have already ſhewn by the 28*th. v.* of the 28*th Chap.* of *Job*) under which all Men lived; namely that Univerſal Law which obligeth all Men to live a virtuous and good Life; and not that particular Law, which was ordain'd for the Conſtitution and Advantage of any ſingle Government, and was ſuited to the diſpoſition of only one particular People. *Laſtly*, *Paul* concludes, becauſe God is the God of all Nations, that is equally good to all Mankind; and becauſe all were equally under the Law and Sin, therefore God ſent Chriſt to all Nations, that he might free all from the Bondage of the Law, that for the future they might do well, not by the compulſion of Law, but by their own free will: So that *Paul* makes good my Doctrine to a tittle, by his ſaying that the Oracles of God were Committed to the *Jews*, we are to underſtand that the Laws which were given to other Nations, by Revelation and

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internal Communication to their Minds, were delivered to the *Jews* in Writing; or we muſt ſay, (that ſeeing *Paul* endeavour'd to confute that which only the *Jews* could Object) he anſwer'd according to the underſtanding, and the then received Opinion of the *Jews*, the better to inſinuate thoſe things which he had partly heard and ſeen, becauſe with the *Grecians* he became a *Greek*, and to the *Jews* a *Jew*. Nothing now remains, but anſwering the Objections of ſome Men, who perſwade themſelves that the Election of the *Jews*, was not temporal only, and in reſpect to their Government, but eternal: they ſay that the *Jews* after the loſs of their Government, tho' ſo many Years diſperſed and divided among all Nations, ſtill ſurvive and are yet in being, which never happen'd to any other Nation; that the Scripture in many places ſeems to declare, that God choſe them to be his People for ever, and that tho' they have loſt their Government and Commonwealth, they are ſtill Gods Elect: the places of Scripture which they think moſt clearly prove this eternal Election, are chiefly the 36. *v.* of the 31 *Chapter* of *Jerem.* where the Prophet teſtifies, that the Seed of *Iſrael* ſhould continue Gods People for ever, by comparing them with the immutable and fixed order of Heaven and Nature.

Nature. *Thus ſaith the Lord which giveth the Sun for a Light by Day, and the Ordinances of the Moon and Stars for a Light by Night, who divideth the Sea when the Waves thereof Roar; if theſe Ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the Seed of* Iſrael *alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a Nation before me for ever.* The ſecond place of Scripture is, *Ezek. Chap.* 20. from the 32. *Verſe* onward, where God ſeemeth to declare, that tho' the *Jews* ſhould willfully depart from his Worſhip, yet he would gather them again from all Countries where they ſhould be ſcatter'd, and would lead them into the Wilderneſs of the People, as he did their Fathers into the Wilderneſs of *Egypt*, and after he had ſeparated from them the Rebels and Tranſgreſſors, he would bring them into his Holy Mountain, where all the Houſe of *Iſrael* ſhould ſerve him, there are other places of Scripture cited by the *Phariſees*, but in anſwering theſe two, I think I ſhall clear all others, which will be eaſily done, after I have proved by Scripture, that Gods choice of the *Jews* was not eternal, but on the ſame Conditions that he before choſe the *Canaanites*, who alſo, as we have ſhewn, had a High Prieſt, who Religiouſly Worſhipt God, and yet were at laſt rejected by God for their Luxury, Sloth and Idolatry. *Moſes,*

Levit.

Levit. chap. 18. *v.* 27, 28. warneth the *Israelites*, that they ſhould not pollute themſelves with Inceſt and other Abominations, as did the *Canaanites*, leaſt the Land ſpewed them out as it did the Nations before them, and *Moſes Deut. chap.* 8. *v.* 19, 20. in expreſs Words threatens their total Deſtruction; *I teſtify againſt you this day, that ye ſhall ſurely periſh as the Nations which the Lord deſtroyeth before your Face, ſo ſhall ye periſh becauſe ye would not be obedient unto the Voice of the Lord your God*, and to this purpoſe, there are other places in the Law, which ſhew, that Gods Election of the *Jews* was not eternal, if therefore the Prophets foretold them, of a new everlaſting Covenant of the Knowledge, Love and Favour of God, it is manifeſt that it was promiſed only to thoſe, that were Pious, and feared God; for in the forecited 20*th. Chapter* of *Ezek.* it is expreſly ſaid, that God would ſeparate from them the Rebellious and Tranſgreſſors, *Zeph. chap.* 3. *v.* 11, 12. God, ſaith he, would take away out of the midſt of them thoſe that were Proud, and he would leave an Afflicted and Poor People, and becauſe this Election was founded only upon Piety and real Vertue, it is not to be imagin'd, that it was promis'd to none but thoſe that were Godly and Vertuous amongſt the *Jews* excluſively

cluſively to all other Nations; but we ought to believe, that the true Prophets among the Heathen (which we have ſhew'd all Nations had) did likewiſe promiſe the ſame to their own People, and ſtill comforted them with it, this eternal Covenant of the Knowledge and Love of God, is Univerſal as appears, *Zeph. chap.* 3. *v.* 10. *from beyond the Rivers of* Æthyopia *my Suppliants even the Daughter of my diſperſed ſhall bring my Offerings.* So that in this particular, no difference is to be made between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and therefore no other Election was peculiar to the *Jews*, but what I have declared; the Prophets in their Propheſies of this Election, which only had reſpect to vertuous living, mingled many things concerning the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Temple, and rebuilding the City, and under thoſe Figures according to the Cuſtom and Nature of Propheſy, expounded things Spiritual, that they might likewiſe declare to the *Jews* whoſe Prophets they were, that Reſtauration of their Government and Temple, which they were to expect in the Reign of *Cyrus*. That the *Jews* ſhould ſtill remain without any Government after a diſperſion of ſo many Years is no wonder, ſeeing they have ſeparated themſelves from all Nations, and incur'd their hatred not only

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by external Rites contrary to thoſe of other Nations, but alſo by the ſign of Circumciſion, which they moſt religiouſly obſerve, that their being hated by other Nations contributes very much to their continuance, is proved by Experience. When the King of *Spain* heretofore compell'd the *Jews* to profeſs the Religion of that Kingdom, or elſe to quit the Country, many *Jews* turn'd *Papiſts*, and becauſe thoſe that changed their Religion became thereby capable of the ſame Priviledges and Honours which natural *Spaniards* enjoy'd, they were preſently mixed with the Natives, and in a ſhort time there remain'd none of the race: but the contrary happen'd in *Portugal*, where tho' the King forced them to profeſs the Religion of the Country, they ſtill lived apart by themſelves, becauſe they were declared incapable of all Preferments. I am of Opinion, that only the ſign of Circumciſion may be able to perpetuate the Nation, and unleſs the Principles of their Religion Effeminate their Minds, they may one time or other when they ſee a fair opportunity, Re-eſtabliſh their Government, and be again choſen by God. Of the like Caſe, the *Chineſes* are a Famous Example, who Religiouſly preſerve a particular lock of Hair upon their Heads, by which they diſtinguiſh themſelves

ſelves from other People, and have thereby preſerved themſelves ſo many thouſand Years, that their Antiquity exceeds all other Nations, they have heretofore recovered their loſt Empire, and without doubt will do ſo again, when the Courage of the *Tartars*, hath lain a while longer buried in Wealth, Luxury and Sloth. Laſtly, if any Man upon what ground ſoever will maintain, that Gods Election of the *Jews* was eternal, I will not contradict him, provided he grant that their Election whether Temporal or Eternal, and as it was peculiar to the *Jews*, did only reſpect their Government and bodily Conveniences (which alone may diſtinguiſh one Nation from another) but that upon the account of Knowledge and Vertue, there is no Nation diſtinguiſht from, nor any choſen by, God before another.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Divine Law.

THE word Law taken abſolutely, ſignifies, That, according to which every individual, or all, or ſome, of the individuals of the ſame Species, do Act by one and the ſame determinate Rule, and that Rule depends either upon the neceſſity of Nature, or the Will and Pleaſure of Men: the Law which depends upon the neceſſity of Nature, is that which neceſſarily follows from the very Nature or Definition of any thing; and the Law which depends upon the Pleaſure of Men, and is more properly called Law, is that which Men for the greater ſafety and benefit of Life, or for other Cauſes do preſcribe to themſelves and others, (for Example) that all Bodies when they hit or daſh againſt other leſs Bodies, do looſe ſo much

much of their own Motion, as they impart to thoſe other leſs Bodies, is the Univerſal Law of all Bodies, which follows from the neceſſity of Nature: ſo likewiſe when a Man remembers one thing, he is preſently mindful of another like it, or as ſoon as he ſees them together, is a Law which neceſſarily follows from Human Nature; but that Men voluntarily part with, or are compell'd to part with that Right, which every one hath by Nature, and oblige themſelves to a certain Rule and Manner of living, depends upon the Will and Pleaſure of Men; and tho' it be abſolutely granted, that all things by the Univerſal Laws of Nature, are ordain'd to be, and Operate, according to a certain and determinate Rule; yet I ſay thoſe Laws do depend upon the Pleaſure of Men. Firſt, becauſe Man as he is a great part of Nature makes and conſtitutes a part of the Power of Nature, and therefore thoſe things which follow from the neceſſity of Human Nature (that is from Nature it ſelf as we conceive it regulated by Human Nature) tho' they follow neceſſarily, yet they follow from Human Power; wherefore the Sanction of thoſe Laws may very well be ſaid to depend upon the Will of Men, becauſe it ſo depends upon the Power of Mans Mind, that

the Mind of Man as it apprehends things under the Notion of true or falſe, may nevertheleſs be clearly underſtood, without thoſe Univerſal Laws; but not without the Law of neceſſity as I have defined it. *Secondly*, I have ſaid thoſe Univerſal Laws of nature, depend upon the Pleaſure of Men, becauſe we ought to define and explain things by their next and immediate cauſes, and that Univerſal conſideration of Fate and the chaining together of cauſes, can no way help us in the forming and ordering our thoughts concerning particular things, (that is) we know not how things are ordered and tyed together, ſo that it is better, yea abſolutely neceſſary, for the benefit of Life, to conſider things as they are poſſible, and ſo much of Law conſider'd abſolutely.

But becauſe the name of Law, by Tranſlation, is apply'd to natural things, and commonly by Law, nothing elſe is meant but a command, which Men may, or may not perform, ſo that it confines human Power to bounds and limits, beyond which it might go, and yet commands nothing which it is not able to do, therefore Law more particularly defined, is that rule and manner of living, which Men for ſome end preſcribe to themſelves or to others: but becauſe very few know the true

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end of Laws, and Men being for the moſt part incapable of Underſtanding it, do not live according to the dictates of reaſon, therefore Law-givers, that they might equally bind all, have wiſely eſtabliſht an end very different, from that which neceſſarily follows from the Nature of Laws (namely) by propounding to thoſe who keep the Law, that which they moſt love, and by threatning the breakers of the Law, with that which they moſt fear; and ſo endeavor, as far as 'tis poſſible, to rule the multitude, as a Horſe is govern'd with a Bridle; ſo that Law in its common acceptation, is that rule of living, which by the Power of others is preſcribed to Men, and conſequently that they who obey Laws are ſaid to live under Law, and may be called Servants or Subjects, he that giveth to every one his due becauſe he is afraid of the gallows, is under the Power of another, and being compell'd by the fear of puniſhment to do what he doth, cannot be called juſt, but he that giveth to every one his due, becauſe he knows the neceſſity and the true end and reaſon of Laws, what he doth is free and voluntary, and he may therefore be deſervedly called a juſt Man: which I ſuppoſe to be St. *Pauls* meaning, when he ſaid, they that lived under the Law could not be juſti-

fy'd by the Law, for juſtice as it is commonly defined, is a conſtant Voluntary reſolution of rendring to every Man that which is his due, and therefore *Solomon Prov. chap.* 20. *v.* 15. ſaith, *it is joy to the juſt to do judgment but the wicked fear.* Seeing then Law is nothing elſe but a rule of living, which Men for ſome end preſcribe to themſelves or to others, the Law may therefore be diſtinguiſht into human and divine, by Mans Law we underſtand that rule of living which ſecures life and the weal public, but the Divine Law hath reſpect only to our cheifeſt good, that is the true knowledge and love of God: the reaſon why I call this Law Divine, is in reſpect of the Nature of our cheifeſt good, which I will with all poſſible brevity and plaineſs declare.

Whereas our better part is our underderſtanding, it is certain if we ſeek our own good, we ought cheifly to endeavour as much as is poſſible, the perfecting our intellect; becauſe in the perfection of that conſiſts our cheifeſt happineſs; and ſince all our knowledge and certainty which removes all doubt, depends only upon the knowledge of God, becauſe nothing can be, or be known without God, and becauſe we may doubt of all things, while we have no clear and diſtinct Idea of God,

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it follows that our perfection, and cheifeſt happineſs, depends only upon the knowledge of God. Moreover, ſince nothing can either exiſt, or be known, without God, it is certain that all things in Nature, in reſpect of their eſſence and perfection, do imply and expreſs the Notion of God, and conſequently the more we know natural things, the greater and more perfect knowledge we acquire of God; becauſe the knowledge of an effect by its Cauſe, is nothing elſe, but knowing the true Nature and Property of the cauſe; ſo that by how much the more we know natural things, ſo much the more perfectly do we know the being of God, who is the cauſe of all things; and all our knowledge (that is) our cheifeſt happineſs, doth not only depend, upon, but wholly conſiſts in, the knowledge of God: which conſequence is made good, by a Mans becomming more or leſs perfect, according to the Nature and perfection of the thing he moſt loves, and ſo on the contrary. He therefore is moſt perfect, who pertakes moſt of the higheſt Beatitude, and who above all things, loves and is moſt delighted with the intellectual knowledge of God, who is the moſt perfect of all beings. Hitherto then our cheifeſt good and happineſs, ſtill returns into the knowledge of God, the

end then of all human actions, ſo far as we have an Idea of him being God; the means which this end requires, may be called the commands of God, becauſe they are as it were preſcribed by God exiſting in our minds; and the rule of living which reſpecteth this end, may be called the divine Law; but what thoſe means are, and what that manner of living is which this end requires, how the beſt Goverments and Men in living one with another ſhould purſue this end, is a Subject for moral Philoſophy to handle, my preſent buſineſs is only to ſpeak in general of the Law divine.

If then the love of God be Man's cheifeſt felicity and beatitude, and the ultimate end and ſcope of all Mens actions; it follows, that he only keeps Gods Law, whoſe care is to love God, not for fear of puniſhment, or for the love of any other thing, as Pleaſure, Wealth, Fame, *&c.* but only becauſe he knows God; or becauſe he knows that the knowledge and love of God is the cheifeſt good the; ſumm then and cheif precept of the Divine Law, is to love God as our cheifeſt good, not as we have already ſaid, for fear of ſome Evil or Puniſhment, nor for the love of any other thing in which we take delight. But tho' the Notion of a God dictate to us, that God is our cheifeſt good, and that

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the knowledge and love of God, is the end to which all our Actions ought to be directed; yet the carnal Man cannot underſtand theſe things, and they ſeem vanity to him, becauſe he hath too low and narrow a knowledge of God, and becauſe alſo in this cheifeſt good which conſiſts only in ſpeculation and purity of the mind, he finds nothing that he can handle, eat, or wherewith to gratify the Fleſh, with which he is moſt pleaſed: but they that know there is nothing more excellent then reaſon, and a clear underſtanding, will eſteem them the moſt ſolid of all Pleaſures. We have now ſhewn in what cheifly the Divine Law conſiſts, and what are human Laws, namely all thoſe which are directed to another end, unleſs they were eſtabliſht by divine Revelation; for under this conſideration, things alſo as we have already ſhewn, are attributed to God; and in this ſenſe the Law of *Moſes*, tho' it were not Univerſal but accomodated to the diſpoſition and preſervation of one particular People, may be called the Law of God or the Divine Law; ſeeing we believe it given by prophetical Revelation: So that now if we conſider the natural Divine Law, as we have explain'd it, we ſhall find it to be Univerſal and common to all Mankind; ſince

ſince we have derived it from human Nature in general. *Secondly*, that it doth not require the belief of Hiſtories whatever they be, ſince this Divine natural Law, is underſtood only in conſideration of human Nature, and we may as well conceive it in any other Man as in *Adam*, and as well in a Man who lives a ſolitary, as in one that leads a ſocial Life, nor can the belief of Hiſtories tho' true, give us the knowledge, or conſequently the Love of God; for the Love of God proceeds from the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of God, muſt be derived from common notions in themſelves certain and known, ſo that the belief of Hiſtory, is far from being a means abſolutely neceſſary to the attainment of our cheifeſt good; but tho' the belief of Hiſtories cannot give us the knowledge and Love of God, yet we grant reading of them to be very uſeful in reſpect of civil Life, for the more we know and obſerve Mens manners and conditions, of which their Actions are the beſt evidence; with the greater caution may we live amongſt them, and the better may we ſuite our Lives and Actions to their diſpoſitions ſo far as is reaſonable. *Thirdly*, this natural Divine Law requires no Ceremonies, (that is) Actions in themſelves indifferent, and are only good in reſpect of

of their inſtitution, or becauſe they repreſent ſome good neceſſary to our well being; or rather Actions whereof our underſtanding doth not comprehend the reaſon; for natural light requires nothing but what that light can attain to, and only that which it diſcovers to us can be our good and the way to our happineſs: thoſe which are good only by precept and inſtitution, or becauſe they are repreſentatives of ſome good, they cannot perfect our underſtanding, they are but meer ſhadows, and and cannot be reckon'd amongſt thoſe Actions which are the Off-ſpring and Fruits of our knowledge and ſound judgment; which to prove more at large, is not here neceſſary. *Fourthly*, the higheſt reward of the Divine Law, is the Law it ſelf; namely to know God, and to love him freely and continually with the whole heart; and the penalty of the Law, is the loſs of that knowledge and love, the Bondage of the Fleſh, and an inconſtant Fluctuating Mind. Theſe things thus conſidered, we are now to inquire firſt, whether by natural light, we can conceive and know God as a Law-giver and Prince preſcribing Laws to Men? *Secondly*, what the Scripture ſaith of this natural light and Law? *Thirdly* to what end Ceremonies were inſtituted? *Fourthly*, of what concern it is to know and believe the

the Sacred Hiſtories. Of the two firſt particulars, we will treat in this, and of the two laſt in the following Chapter. What we are to conclude concerning the firſt particular, may be eaſily deduced from the Nature of Gods will, which is diſtinguiſht from Gods knowledge, only in reſpect of our reaſon (that is) the will and knowledge of God, are in themſelves one and the ſame thing, nor are they diſtinguiſht but in reference to the thoughts we form of Gods knowledge (for example) when we conſider that the Nature of a Triangle is from all eternity contain'd in the Divine Nature, as an eternal Truth, then we ſay God hath the Idea of a Triangle, or underſtandeth the Nature of a Triangle; but when afterwards we conſider that the Nature of a Triangle, is ſo contain'd in the Divine Nature not in reſpect of the neceſſity of the eſſence and Nature of a Triangle, but in reſpect only of the neceſſity of the divine nature, yea that the neceſſity of the eſſence and Properties of a Triangle as they are conceived to be eternal Verities depend only upon the neceſſity of the divine nature and knowledge of God, and not upon the nature of the Triangle, then that which we have called Gods knowledge we call Gods Will and decree, therefore in relation to God,

God, we ſay one and the ſame thing when we ſay that God knew, or that God willed and decreed that three Angles of a Triangle, ſhould be equal to two right Angles. Whence it follows that Gods affirmations and negations, muſt always imply eternal neceſſity and verity, if then (for example) God ſaid to *Adam*, that he would not have him eat of the Tree of Good and Evil, it would imply a contradiction that *Adam* ſhould be able to eat of it, and it was impoſſible that *Adam* ſhould eat of it, if that divine decree did imply eternal verity and neceſſity, but becauſe the Scripture ſaith, that God did command *Adam*, that he ſhould not eat of that Tree, and yet notwithſtanding he did eat of it, it muſt neceſſarily be ſaid, that God only revealed to *Adam* the Evil that would follow upon it, but did not reveal the neceſſity of the Evil's following, whence it came to paſs, that *Adam* underſtood that Revelation, not as an eternal verity and neceſſary Truth, but as a Law or Ordinance, upon which Gain or Loſs was to follow, not in reſpect of the Neceſſity and Nature of the Action done, but only in reſpect of the Abſolute Will and Command of a Prince. The Revelation therefore in reſpect of *Adam* only, and only for want of Knowledge in him, was a Law, and

God

God a Law-giver and Prince. For the like defect of Knowledge, was the *Decalogue* a Law to the *Jews*, becauſe they knew not the Being of God to be an Eternal Verity; therefore, that which was revealed to them in the *Decalogue*, namely that there was a God, and that he only was to be worſhiped, was received by them as a Law, but had God ſpoken to them immediately, and not by Corporeal means, they had taken it for an Eternal Verity and not for a Law, and what we ſay of *Adam* and the *Iſraelites*, may be ſaid of all the Prophets, who writ Laws in the Name of God, that they did not rightly underſtand God's Decrees to be Eternal Verities. (For Example) *Moſes* by Revelation or by Principles revealed to him, underſtood the means whereby the People of *Iſrael* might be beſt united, in a particular Place of the World, form a Common-wealth, and erect a Government, and alſo the beſt way to compel that People to obedience; but yet he did not know, nor was it revealed to him, that thoſe means, or that Way was beſt, neither that from the common Obedience of the People, in ſuch a Climate of the World, that end would neceſſarily follow, to which thoſe means were directed; and therefore all thoſe things were not underſtood by him as Eternal Verities, but as

Precepts

Precepts and Inſtitutions, which he preſcribed as the Laws of God, and this was the Reaſon, that he imagined God, was a Governour, a Lawgiver, a King merciful and Juſt, when all theſe are only the Atributes of Human Nature, and not any Part of the Divine Nature: but tho' we ſay this of the Prophets, who writ Laws in the Name of God, we ought not to ſay the ſame of *Chriſt*, for though he ſeemed to write Laws in the Name of God, we are to believe, that he underſtood things truly and perfectly, for *Chriſt* was not ſo much a Prophet, as he was the Mouth of God, for God by the Mind of *Chriſt* (as we have ſhewn in the firſt Chapter) did reveal ſome things to Mankind, as he did before by *Angels*, (that is a Created Voice.) And by Viſions; wherefore it would be altogether Irrational to think, that God accommodated his revelations to the Opinions of *Chriſt*, as that God fitted heretofore his revelations to the Opnions of the Viſions, and of the *Angels* (that is created Voices) that he might communicate the things, which were to be revealed to the Prophets, then which nothing can be more abſurd, eſpecially ſince *Chriſt* was not ſent to the *Jews* only, but to all Mankind: ſo that it was not ſufficient his Mind ſhould be fitted to the Opinion of the *Jews*, but to the Opi-

nions

nions and Documents general to all Mankind, that is thoſe Notions which were common and True; and from communicating himſelf immediately to *Chriſt*, or to his underſtanding, and not as he did to the Prophets by words and Signs, nothing elſe can be concluded, but that *Chriſt* did truly perceive and underſtand thoſe things which were revealed; for then a thing is clearly underſtood, when it is clearly and mentally perceived without the help of Words and Signs. *Chriſt* therefore underſtood things truly and plainly, and if ever he preſcribed them as Laws, he did it becauſe the People were ignorant and obſtinate, and acting God's Part, applyed himſelf to the Nature and Diſpoſition of the People, and therefore tho' he ſpoke ſomewhat plainer then the reſt of the Prophets, yet ſometimes he ſpoke Obſcurely and by Parables, eſpecially when he ſpoke to them, to whom it was not given to know the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat. chap.* 13. *v.* 11. But without doubt, all things which he taught thoſe, to whom it was given to know the Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, he taught them as Eternal Verities, and did not preſcribe them as Laws, and in this conſideration, he freed them from the Bondage of the Law, and yet nevertheleſs did the more confirm it, and deeply ingrave it on

their Hearts, which *Paul* ſeems to declare in the 7*th. chap.* of his *Epiſt.* to the *Romans*, *v.* 6*th. But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we ſhould ſerve in Newneſs of Spirit, and not in the Oldneſs of the Letter*, and in *chap.* 3. *v.* 8. *Therefore we conclude, that a Man is juſtified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law.* But neither doth *Paul* ſpeak very clearly, for he ſaith, *Rom. chap.* 3. *v.* 5. *I ſpeak as a Man*, which he expreſly ſaith, when he calls God juſt and righteous, and without doubt becauſe of the Frailty of the Fleſh, he ſuppoſeth Mercy, Grace and Anger to be in God, applying his Diſcourſes to the underſtanding of the Common People as may be ſeen in his *firſt Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians chap.* 3. *v.* 1, 2. *Brethren, I could not ſpeak unto you as Spiritual, but as unto Carnal Men. Rom. chap.* 8. *v.* 18. He declareth that the Mercy and Wrath of God doth not depend upon Mens Works, but on his own Will. *Moreover no Man is juſtified by the Works of the Law, but only by Faith, Rom. chap.* 3. *v.* 28. And by Faith nothing is meant, but a full conſent of the Mind. *Laſtly, Paul* declares that no Body is Bleſſed who hath not in him the Mind of *Chriſt*, *Rom. chap.* 8. *v.* 9. *Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*; by which Mind and Spirit, he may underſtand

the Laws of God to be Eternal Verities. We conclude therefore, that God was deſcribed as a Prince and Law-giver, and ſtiled Juſt and Merciful, only in regard to the Capacity of the Vulgar, and their want of Knowledge, but that God from the neceſſity and perfection of his Nature, doth act and govern all things, and his Will and Decrees are Eternal Verities, and imply Eternal Neceſſity, which is the thing I purpoſed in the firſt Place to explain, and prove, paſſing now to the Second Particular, let us run through the whole Scripture, and ſee what it ſaith of this Natural Light and Divine Law. The firſt thing we meet with, is, the Hiſtory of the firſt Man, where we are told, God commanded *Adam*, he ſhould not eat of the Fruit of the *Tree* of good and evil, which ſeems to ſignify, that God commanded *Adam*, to do and ſeek after God, under the Notion of good, and not as it is contrary to evil: that is, to ſeek after good for good's ſake, and not for fear of evil; for he that doth good as we have already ſaid, upon the account of knowing and loving what is good, doth it with a free and conſtant mind, but he that is compell'd by the fear of evil, is forced by puniſhment, acts like a Slave, and lives under the command of another; and therefore that one thing which God commanded *Adam*, comprehends

hends all the Divine Natural Law, and perfectly agrees with the Dictates of Natural Reaſon, now would it be a difficult matter from this very Principle, to unfold the whole Hiſtory or Parable of the firſt Man; but I paſs it by, becauſe I am not certain whether my Explication will agree with the Writers meaning, and becauſe many will have the Hiſtory to be no Parable, but a plain and ſimple Narration: it will therefore be better to make uſe of other Places of Scripture, thoſe eſpecially, of which he was Author, who in Strength of natural Knowledge exceeded the wiſeſt of his Age, and whoſe ſayings, the People counted as Sacred as they did thoſe of the Prophets, I mean *Solomon*, whoſe Propheſy and Piety is not ſo much commended in Scripture, as his Wiſdom and Prudence; he in his Proverbs calls Human Underſtanding, the Fountain of Life, and placeth misfortune only in Folly; for he ſaith, *chap.* 16. *v.* 22. *Underſtanding is a well-ſpring of Life to him that hath it, but the Puniſhment of Fools is their folly.* Where we are to note, that by the word Life, in the *Hebrew* is ſignified, happy Life, as appears *Deut. chap.* 30. *v.* 10. *I have ſet before thee Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing, therefore chuſe Life.* And he therefore deriveth the happineſs of Life from Knowledge, and

Puniſhment from the want of it, which expreſly agrees with what we obſerved in the fourth Place, concerning the Divine Natural Law: but that this Fountain of Life the Underſtanding, preſcribeth Laws to the Wiſe, is proved by *Prov. chap.* 13. *v.* 14. *The Law of the Wiſe is a Fountain of Life*, that is as appears by the fore-cited Text, the Underſtanding and Knowledge. Moreover, *chap.* 3. *v.* 13. 'Tis ſaid in expreſs Terms, that Uuderſtanding and Wiſdom make a man happy, and give him the true peace of mind. *Happy is the Man that findeth Wiſdom, and the Man that getteth Underſtanding.* And *v.* 16, 17. *Length of days is in her right Hand, and in her left Rickes and Honour, her ways are ways of Righteouſneſs, and all her Paths* (which Wiſdom points out) *are Peace.* In the Opinion of *Solomon* then, only Wiſe men live quietly and happily, not as the wicked, whoſe minds are diſturbed and toſt to and fro with contrary Paſſions and Affections: So that as *Iſaiah* ſaith *chap.* 47. *v.* 20, 21. *The wicked are like the troubled Sea, that cannot reſt, there is no Peace to the wicked.* Laſtly, in the Proverbs that which clearly confirms this Opinion, is what he ſaith, *chap.* 2. *v.* 3. *If thou crieſt after Knowledge, and liſteſt up thy Voice for Underſtanding*, then *v.* 5. *Thou ſhalt underſtand the fear of the Lord, and*

and find the Knowledge of God. (or rather the Love of God, for the *Hebrew* word *Jadah* ſignifies both,) for Verſe the *6th.* (which obſerve well) *The Lord giveth Wiſdom, out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Wiſdom.* Which words clearly declare, *Firſt*, that only Underſtanding and Wiſdom teach us to fear God Prudently, (*i e*) to ſerve him truly, and to worſhip him rightly. Next, that Wiſdom and Knowledge flow from the Mouth of God, and are given by God; that is, our Underſtanding and Wiſdom depends upon, proceeds from, and is only perfected by, the *Idea* or Knowledge of God: *Solomon* goes on, and in the *9th Verſe* ſhews, that in, and from, this Knowledge, is continued and derived the Science of true Morality and Policy; *Then ſhalt thou underſtand Righteouſneſs, Judgment and Equity, yea every good thing.* And *Verſe* the 10*th When Wiſdom ſhall enter into thy Heart, and Knowledge is pleaſant to thy Soul*, Verſe the 11*th. Diſcretion ſhall preſerve thee, underſtanding ſhall keep thee.* All which Expreſſions plainly agree with natural Knowledge, which teacheth us Morality and true Vertue; after we have gained the Knowledge of things, and taſted the Excellency of Underſtanding. The Happineſs and Tranquility, therefore of a Man, that improves his natural

Reaſon and Knowledge, doth not in *Solomon*'s Opinion chiefly depend upon Fortune; (that is God's external Aſſiſtance) but upon his own internal Vertue and Faculties (that is God's internal aid) becauſe by watching, working, and well conſidering, he preſerveth himſelf. *Laſtly*, that place of St. *Paul*. *Rom. chap. 1ſt. v.* 20. Is very worthy of our Notice, where (according to *Tremelius*'s verſion of the *Siriack* Text) he ſaith, *The inviſible things of God, from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his external Power and Godhead, ſo that they are without excuſe.* By which words he maketh it evident, that all men by the Light of natural Reaſon and Knowledge, may underſtand the Power of God, and his Eternal Divinity, by which they may be able to know and conjecture, what they are to ſeek and purſue, and what they are to avoid; and ſo concludes, that all are without excuſe, and cannot pretend Ignorance, which they might very vvell, if he ſpoke of Supernatural Knovvledge, and of the Bodily paſſion and reſurrection of *Chriſt*; therefore he goes on in the *24th Verſe* and ſays, *God gave them up to uncleanneſs, through the Luſt of their own Hearts*, deſcribing to the end of the *Chapter*, the Vices of Ignorance; which Vices, he declares to be the

puniſhment

puniſhment of Ignorance, agreeing with that Proverb of *Solomon* mentioned *Chap.* 16. *v.* 22. *The puniſhment of Fools is their folly.* So that it is no wonder, *Paul* ſays evil doers are inexcuſable, for as every Man ſows, ſo ſhall he reap. Evil unleſs Wiſdom prevent, neceſſarily brings forth evil; the Scripture therefore expreſly commends natural Knowledge, and the Divine Natural Law, ſo that I have done with what I intend to treat of in this *Chapter.*

CHAP. V.

The reaſon why Ceremonies were inſtituted? to what end? and tow hom the Belief of Scripture-Hiſtories are neceſſary.?

IN the foregoing *Chapter* we have ſhewn, that the Divine Law, which makes Men happy, and teacheth the right way of Living, is Univerſal to all Mankind; and we have ſo derived it from Human Nature,

that it appears to be born with, and as it were engraved upon, the Mind and Heart of Man; but becauſe Ceremonies, thoſe at leaſt which we find in the Old Teſtament, were only inſtituted for the *Jews*; and ſo fitted to their Government, that for the moſt part, they might be obſerved in their Public Aſſemblies, tho' not by every Individual Perſon; it is manifeſt, that they did not belong to the Divine Law, nor contributed any thing to the making men happy or vertuous, but concerned only the Election of the *Jews* (that is by what we have proved in the third Chapter) the temporal happineſs of the Body, and peace of their Government, and conſequently could be of no longer uſe, than while their Government laſted. If thoſe Ceremonies in the Old Teſtament, had any relation to *God's Law*, it was only becauſe they were inſtituted by revelation, or upon revealed Principles; but becauſe the moſt ſolid reaſon prevails little with ordinary Churchmen, I will make uſe of Scripture, to ſhew upon what account, and in what manner, Ceremonies were uſeful to the Eſtabliſhment and Preſervation of the *Jewiſh* Common-wealth. The Prophet *Iſaiah* very plainly declares, that by the Divine Law is meant, that Univerſal Law which conſiſts in living uprightly, not in Ceremonies, *Chap.* 1*ſt.* *v.* 10.

10. He calleth upon the People to hear the Law of God, but tells them in the following *Verſes*, that God hated their Sacrifices and Oblations, their New *Moons*, their *Feaſts*, and their *Sabbaths*, and in the 16. and 17. *Verſes* declares, the Law it ſelf to be comprehended in a few Particulars; namely in cleanſing the Heart, in conſtantly doing well, in relieving the Oppreſſed, and no leſs clear is that Place, in the 40*th Pſal. v.* 7, 8. *Sacrifice and Offering, thou didſt not deſire, mine Ears haſt thou opened, burnt Offering and Sin Offering haſt thou not required, I delight to do thy Will O God, for thy Law is within my Heart*: here *David* calls that the Law of God, which is written in his Heart or inward Parts, ſeparated from Ceremonies, which not being in their own Nature good, are not written in our minds: beſide theſe two Places, others may be found in Scripture, which teſtify the ſame thing, but there is no need of more Quotations. That Ceremonies conduce not to our true Happineſs, but reſpect only the temporary Proſperity of Government, appears likewiſe by the Scripture, which for the Obſervation of Ceremonies, promiſed only bodily Benefits; but for keeping the Univerſal Divine Law true Felicity: In the Books commonly called the five Books of *Moſes*, nothing is promiſed, but temporal Proſperity, namely,

Honour,

Honour, Fame, Victory, Riches, Pleaſures and Health; and altho' in thoſe five Books, are contained beſide Ceremonies, many things that are Moral, yet they are not there contained as Moral Doctrines, and Univerſal inſtructions common to all, but as Commands and Precepts, fitted to the particular Capacity, and Genius of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and ſuch as concern'd the proſperous State of that Government: (for Example) *Moſes* did not teach the *Jews* as a Doctor and Prophet, but commanded them as a Lawgiver and Prince, that they ſhould not kill or ſteal; nor doth he prove this as Doctrine by Reaſon, but to his Commands adds Puniſhment, which according to the diſpoſition of every Nation, as we find by Experience, may and ought to vary, the Commandment of not committing Adultery, reſpected only the Proſperity of the Commonwealth and its Government, for had it been a Moral Doctrine, which concern'd the Peace of the mind, as well as of the Commonwealth, and every particular *Man*'s true felicity, it would have as much condemn'd the inward concupiſcence of the Heart, as the outward act of Luſt, as *Chriſt* did *Math. Chap.* 5. *v.* 28. Whoſe Doctrines were Univerſal, and therefore the reward which Chriſt promiſed, were Spiritual and not

not Corporal; for Christ was sent not to ordain Laws, and Establish Government, but only to Preach and Teach the Universal Divine Law: and hereby we understand Christ did not Abrogate the Law of *Moses*, seeing he introduced no new Laws into the *Jewish* Commonwealth, but Preached only Moral Doctrines, which he distinguisht from the Laws of the Commonwealth, because the *Pharisees* were so Ignorant, that they thought every one lived Righteously who kept *Moses* Law, which (as we have already said) concern'd only that Commonwealth, and served rather to compel, then instruct the *Jews*. But let us now return to other places of Scripture, which for the observing of Ceremonies, promise nothing but bodily benefits, and for the keeping of the Universal Divine Law, true beatitude. In this point, none of all the Prophets speaks so plainly as *Isaiah*, *Chap.* 58. for after Condemning Hypocrisy, and commending Liberty and Charity towards themselves and their Neighbours, which are Vertues dictated to us by the Universal Divine Law, he saith, *Verse* the 8*th*. *Then shall thy Light break out as the Morning, and thy Health shall spring forth speedily, thy Righteousness shall go before thee, the Glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.* Afterwards he commends to them the

the keeping of the Sabbath, and for their care in obſerving that, he promiſeth, *Verſe* the 24*th*. *Then ſhalt thou delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and I will cauſe thee to ride upon the high places of the Earth, and feed thee with the Heritage of* Jacob *thy Father for the Mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it:* by which we plainly ſee, that the Prophet promiſed to the Practice of the Divine Natural Law, a ſpiritual Reward, a ſound Mind in a healthful Body, and the Glory of God after Death; but to the Obſervation of Ceremonies, nothing but the proſperous continuance of their Government, and bodily Happineſs, in the 24*th*. and 25*th*. *Pſalms*, no mention is made of Ceremonies, but only of moral Duties, becauſe thoſe *Pſalms* treat of nothing but true Happineſs and Beatitude, tho' Parabolically propounded; for 'tis certain that Gods Holy Hill, his Tabernacles, and dwelling in them, with other Bleſſings mentioned in thoſe *Pſalms*, could not litterally ſignify the Mountain of *Jeruſalem*, or the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, for they were inhabited by none but the Tribe of *Levi*, who Miniſtred in the Tabernacle and Temple. Moreover all thoſe Sayings of *Solomon*, cited in the preceding *Chapter*, concerning the Excellency of Wiſdom and Knowledge, promiſe true Felicity, becauſe they

they teach us to know and fear God, that the *Jews* after the deſtruction of their Government, were not bound to the Obſervation and Practice of Ceremonies, is evident by the Prophet *Jeremy*, who foretelling the approaching deſtruction of the City of *Jeruſalem*, *Chap.* 9. *v.* 23, 24. declares that none are acceptable to God, but they that know him, and underſtand that he exerciſeth loving Kindneſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth, and that he will delight in none but thoſe that know theſe things; as if the Prophet had ſaid, that after the deſtruction of the City, God would for the future require nothing elſe of the *Jews*, but the Obſervation of the Natural Law, Obligatory to all Mankind. The New Teſtament likewiſe proves the ſame thing, for it teacheth only Moral Doctrines, and promiſeth to the Practice of them the Kingdom of Heaven; the Apoſtles, after the Goſpel began to be Preached to Nations that were not obliged to the Laws of the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth, quite left off Ceremonies, and if the *Phariſees* after the deſtruction of their Government, retained any, or the greateſt part of them, it was more to oppoſe the Chriſtians, then to pleaſe God; for after the ſacking of the City, when the *Jews* were carried Captives into *Babilon*, and were not

not (for ought we know) divided into Sects, they presently neglected Ceremonies, bid farewel to the whole Law of *Moses*, forgot the Laws of their own Country, as superfluous, and mixed themselves with the rest of the Nations, as appears out of *Esdras* and *Nehemiah*: therefore without doubt, the *Jews* after their Government was dissolved, were no more bound by *Moses*'s Law, then they were before they became a Commonwealth, for while they lived among other Nations before their going out of *Egypt*, they had no peculiar Law, nor were obliged to any but the Natural Law; observing also the Laws of the Country and the Nation where they lived, which were not repugnant to the Divine Natural Law; the *Patriarchs* indeed offer'd Sacrifices to God, but that was because they were from their Infancy accustomed so to do, it being the Practice of all Men from the time of *Enoch* to offer Sacrifices, to incite and testify their Devotion: the *Patriarchs* therefore offered their Sacrifices, neither as Men Commanded by any Divine Precept, or Instructed by the Universal Law of Nature, but only because it was the Custom of that time, and if they did it by any Command, that Command was no other then that of the Commonwealth wherein they lived, and

which

which (as I have ſhewn in the 3*d*. *Chapter* where I ſpoke of *Melchiſedek*) they were bound to obey.

Having juſtified my Opinion by Scripture-Authority, I will next from general Principles very briefly ſhew, why Ceremonies were uſeful to Eſtabliſh and Preſerve the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth. Society is not only convenient, but abſolutely neceſſary to living ſecurely from the danger of Enemies, and likewiſe for the quicker and more eaſy diſpatch of human labour and buſineſs; for unleſs Men mutually aſſiſt one another, they muſt want both time and means (ſo far as 'tis poſſible) to preſerve themſelves; all Men are not equally fit for all things, nor is every one able to procure thoſe things of which he ſingly ſtands in need; no individual Perſon hath time or ſtrength enough to Plow, Sow, Reap, Grind, Bake, Boyl, Weave, Knit, and do very many other things neceſſary to ſupport Life, not mentioning Arts and Siences, which perfect and make human nature happy; we ſee that thoſe People who live Barbarouſly without any Policy, lead miſerable bruitiſh lives, and do not come by thoſe neceſſaries and ſorry Houſhold-ſtuff which they have, without helping one another; if Men were ſo conſtituted by Nature, that they would deſire nothing but

but what right reaſon dictates, Societies would need no Laws, and only to inſtruct Men in the precepts of Morality, would be ſufficient to make them with a free and conſtant mind, do whatever ſhould be for the public Good, but 'tis far otherwiſe with human Nature, all men indeed ſeek their own *Good* and *Advantage*, not according to the Dictates of right Reaſon, but according to their own peculiar Luſts, and hurryed with the violence of their own Affections, without regard to any thing elſe, believe that to be good, which they ardently deſire. This is the reaſon why no Society of *Men* can ſubſiſt without *Government*, *Force* and *Laws* to moderate and reſtrain unbridled Paſſions and Affections: but down right compulſion is intollerable to human Nature, and therefore *Seneca*, the *Tragedian* ſays, Empires maintain'd by force laſt but a little while; mild *Governments* endure longeſt, what *Men* do out of fear they do againſt their Will, never conſidering the utility or neceſſity of what they do, but only take care to avoid capital Puniſhment; yea, they can hardly refrain from rejoycing at the loſſes and misfortunes of their Rulers, and tho' they themſelves ſuffer by it, cannot forbear wiſhing and doing them all the miſchief they are able; but above all things, *Men* are impatient of obeying

beying, and being govern'd by their equals; and laſtly, nothing is more difficult than to deprive *Men* of that Liberty, which they once enjoy'd: From all which it follows, that all Societies, if it be poſſible, ſhould be govern'd by their own general aſſemblies, that ſo no Body may be Subjected to his equal; but where the reins of Government are in the hands of a few, or one ſingle Perſon, there that ſingle Perſon ought to have extraordinary qualifications above others, or at leaſt, ſhould endeavour to make the People think ſo, and in every government ſuch Laws ought to be made, as are likely to incline Men to do their duty, not for fear of puniſhment but in hope of reward. Moreover, becauſe obedience conſiſts in executing the commands of thoſe that rule, it follows, that in a Society where the ruling Power is in the Collective Body of the People, and Laws are made by general and common conſent, there is no ſuch thing as obedience, and tho' the Laws be increaſed or diminiſhed, yet ſtill the People remain free; becauſe they are not Subject to the Authority of another, but Act by their own voluntary univerſal agreement and conſent: but 'tis quite contrary, where a ſingle Perſon governs; for there all are Subject to whatever he commands, ſo that unleſs the Peo-

Ple have been always educated under ſuch [a]bſolute government, it will be very difficult for a Monarch, to make new Laws, or to take away any liberty from the People, which they have formerly enjoy'd.

Theſe things being thus generally conſidered, we now come to the Commonwealth of the *Jews*, who when they went firſt out of *Egypt*, were not obliged to the Laws of any other Nation, ſo that they might then conſtitute and enact what Laws and Statutes they pleaſed, and fix themſelves and their government, in any part of the World they had a mind to poſſeſs; but being a ſtupid People, and by long ſervitude depraved in their underſtanding, they were unfit to make good and prudent Laws, or to govern themſelves by their own democratical Authority without a Superior, the Power of governing was therefore to be put into the hands of a ſingle Perſon, who was to command the reſt, and compel them by force, who was likewiſe to preſcribe and interpret Laws: This Power *Moſes* eaſily obtain'd, becauſe he excell'd all others in divine Vertue and Power, which Power he perſwaded the People by many Teſtimonies *Exod. chap.* 14. *v.* 31. and *chap.* 19. *v.* 9. was given him by God, being thus qualify'd he made and preſcribed Laws to the People, but took

ſpecial

ſpecial care, that the People might do their duty, not ſo much out of fear, as of their own free will, which he did upon two conſiderations; *Firſt*, becauſe the Peoples obſtinate and Rebellious Nature, would not endure continual compulſion. *Secondly*, becauſe there was an approaching War, which was like to ſucceed better by encouraging, then by threatning the Soldiers, every one endeavoring by his valor rather to get Reputation, then avoid Puniſhment: for this reaſon alſo, *Moſes* by Gods command, introduced Religion into the Common-wealth, that Devotion, more then fear, might incline them to obedience. *Laſtly*, he obliged them by many benefits, which he promiſed they ſhould receive from Heaven. The Laws which he eſtabliſht were not very ſevere, as will appear to any Man that conſiders, how many circumſtances were required to the condemning of any offender; that the People who could not govern themſelves, might abſolutely depend upon the verbal commands of the ſupream Magiſtrate, he did not permit them being accuſtomed to *Bondage*, to do any thing of their own accord; but whatever they did, was to be done according to the preſcript of the Law; no Man could at his own Pleaſure, Plow, Sow, or Reap; no Man could eat what he

pleaſed, nor could he cloth himſelf, ſhave his Head and Beard, or make merry, but according to certain Rules ſet down in the Law; nor was this all, for they were to have upon the Poſts of their Doors, upon their Hands and their Fore-heads, certain Signs which were to put them in continual mind of their obedience: the end and deſign then of Ceremonies, was that the People might do nothing by their own will and determination, but only by the command of another, and by continual Action and meditation confeſs, they were not Maſters of themſelves, but wholly Subjected to the will of another, by all which 'tis evident, that Ceremonies conduce nothing to true felicity, and that thoſe of the Old *Teſtament*, yea the whole Law of *Moſes*, concerned only the government of the *Jews*, and conſequently had reſpect to nothing more then Bodily conveniences; as for Chriſtian Ceremonies, namely Baptiſm, the Lords Supper, Holy-days, public Forms of Prayer, or any others common to Chriſtianity; if they were ever inſtituted by Chriſt, or his Apoſtles, (which doth not clearly appear) they were only appointed as marks and ſigns of the Univerſal Church, but not as things that contain any Sanctity in themſelves, or contribute any thing to eternal happineſs, and therefore being

being ordain'd, not in reference to government, but only in reſpect to mutual Society, he that liveth alone, or he that liveth under a government where the Chriſtian Religion is forbidden, is not oblig'd to the Obſervation of theſe Ceremonies, and yet may live happily; an example whereof we have in the Kingdom of *Japan*, where the *Hollanders* by the command of their *Eaſt-India-Company*, abſtain from all outward Worſhip, and that their ſo doing is juſtifiable, I think is not difficult to prove from the Fundamental Principles of the New *Teſtament*. But I haſten to the *Second* particular which I purpoſed to treat of in this Chapter, namely, why believing the Hiſtories contained in Scripture is neceſſary, and to find out this by Natural reaſon, I thus proceed.

Whoever will perſwade, or diſſwade Men to, or from, any thing, which is not in, or by it ſelf known; muſt deduce that thing from Principles generally granted and allowed, and muſt convince thoſe Men either by reaſon or experience, that is, by things which Men by their Sences know to have happen'd in Nature, or elſe by maxims which the underſtanding can neither doubt or deny; but unleſs experience be ſuch as is clearly and diſtinctly underſtood, tho' it may convince a Man, yet it

cannot equally affect the underſtanding, and diſperſe the Clouds thereof, as will that which is proved by intellectual Principles (that is) orderly deduced from Notions certain and intelligible, eſpecially if the queſtion be of any thing that is meerly Spiritual, and falls not under ſenſe: but becauſe to prove things only by intellectual Propoſitions, requires a long Chain of Notions, much Circumſpection, Sharpneſs of Wit, and great Temper, all which are ſeldom found together; therefore Men had rather be taught by experience, then put themſelves to the trouble of linking together all their perceptions deduced from a few maxims: ſo that he that would teach a whole Nation, I need not ſay all mankind any particular doctrine, and would be clearly underſtood in all things by all Men, he muſt confirm his Doctrine by experience, and muſt accomodate his reaſons and the definitions of what he teacheth, to the capacity of the vulgar, who make up the greateſt part of Mankind, and muſt not think of giving ſuch definitions as he thinks fitteſt, for tying his reaſons together, becauſe he would then write only to the Learned, and would be underſtood but by a very few. Seeing then the Scripture was revealed firſt, for the uſe and inſtruction of a whole Nation, and afterwards of all Mankind;

Mankind; it was absolutely necessary, that the things therein contain'd, should be suited to the capacity of the common People, and confirm'd only by experience: to make my meaning yet more clear, I say that all things taught in Scripture, which are only Speculative, are cheifly these. *First*, that there is a God, or a being which made all things, and by infinite wisdom governeth and sustaineth all things, who taketh great care of Mankind, and particularly of those that live honestly and Religiously; but for those that live wickedly, he separates them from the good, and afflicts them with greivous Punishments. But all those things the Scripture confirms only by experience, namely by the Histories which it recites, nor doth it plainly define any of these things, but fitteth all its reasonings and expressions, according to the capacity and understanding of the vulgar, and tho' experience can give a Man no true and plain knowledge of things, nor teach a Man what God is, in what manner he orders and upholdeth all things, or how he takes care of Mankind, yet it gives Men so much light and knowledge, as is sufficicient to Imprint in their Minds Piety and Obedience. So that now I think 'tis very plain, to what Persons and for what rea-

ſons, the belief of Scripture Hiſtories is neceſſary, that is to the common People, by whom things cannot be clearly and diſtinctly underſtood; and whoever denies theſe Hiſtories, becauſe he neither believes the being or Providence of God, is impious; but he that is ignorant of theſe Hiſtories, and yet by natural reaſon concludes there is a God who made and preſerveth all things, if he live a vertuous life, that Man is bleſt, yea more bleſſed then the vulgar, becauſe beſide the Truth of his Opinions, he hath a clear and diſtinct underſtanding. *Laſtly*, he that is ignorant of Scripture Hiſtory, and knows nothing of God by the light of natural reaſon, if he be not impious and obſtinate, yet he may well be accounted a Beaſt rather then a Man, and to have no Gift of God in him: but 'tis to be obſerved, that when we ſay the knowledge of Scripture Hiſtory is very neceſſary for the common People, I do not mean all the Hiſtories contain'd in the *Bible*, but only the cheif; and thoſe that give the cleareſt Evidence of the before mentioned Doctrins, and have the greateſt influence upon the minds of Men; for if all the Hiſtories in the Scripture, were abſolutely neceſſary to prove its Doctrine, and no concluſion could be made but from the conſideration of all the Hiſtories together

contain'd

contain'd in it, then the demonſtration and proof of its Doctrine, would not only exceed the capacity of the vulgar, but the underſtanding of all Mankind; for who could poſſibly retain and comprehend ſo great a Number of Hiſtories, and ſo many circumſtances and parts of Doctrine, as might be collected from ſo many and different Hiſtories; truly I cannot be perſwaded that thoſe Men, who left us the Scripture as we now have it, abounded with ſo much Wit, as to be able to find out ſuch a demonſtration of its Doctrine; much leſs do I believe, that the Doctrine of the Scripture could not have been underſtood, unleſs we had been told of *Iſaacs* ſtrivings about the digging of Wells, of *Achitophels*, Council to *Abſalon*, and the Civil Wars between the Children of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, with other Chronicles of like kind; or that the *Jews* who lived in the time of *Moſes*, were not ſo capable of underſtanding the Doctrine of Scripture by Hiſtories, as were the *Jews* who lived in the time of *Eſdras*, of which more hereafter, the common People are therefore obliged to know only thoſe Hiſtories, which ſtir up their minds to Devotion, Piety and Obedience, but they are not competent Judges of thoſe Hiſtories, becauſe they are more pleaſed with the narrations and the

unexpected

unexpected events of things, then with the Doctrine it ſelf; and for this reaſon beſide the reading of Hiſtories, they need Paſtors and Miniſters in the Church, to inſtruct their weak underſtanding. But not to digreſs from what we principally deſign'd to prove, we conclude that the belief of Hiſtories whatever they be, doth not belong to the Divine Law, nor doth of it ſelf make Men happy or bleſſed, nor are Hiſtories profitable, except it be in point of Doctrine, which is the only thing that makes ſome Hiſtories therefore contain'd in the Old and New *Teſtament*, excel thoſe that are profane and common, and Scripture Hiſtories mutually compared, are more excellent one then another, for ſound and wholſom Doctrine. He then that reads Scripture Hiſtories, and in all things gives intire credit to them, yet if he follow not their Doctrine and amend his Life, it is all one with him, as if he read the *Alchoran*, a Comedy, or any vulgar Hiſtory; but as we have already ſaid, he that never heard of Scripture, if his Opinions be true, and his Life righteous, he is truly bleſſed, and the Spirit of Chriſt is in him: but the *Jews* are of a contrary Opinion, for they ſay, let a Mans Opinions be never ſo Orthodox, and his Life never ſo vertuous, yet if he be guided only by natural Light, and not

not by the Doctrins which are Prophetically revealed to *Moſes*, he can never be bleſſed and happy, which *Rabbi Maimonides* boldly affirms in his Eighth Chapter and Second Law concerning *Kings*. He that receiveth the Seven Commandments and diligently performeth them, is one of the Pious among the Nations, and Heir of the World to come (that is) if he receive and Practiſe them, becauſe God in his Law commanded and revealed them by *Moſes*, and becauſe thoſe precepts were alſo given to the Sons of *Noah* : but if he Practiſe them by the guidance and dictates of natural reaſon, he is none of us, nor is he to be thought one of the Pious and Learned of the Nations. It was an opinion among the *Jews*, that God gave to *Noah* ſeven Commandments, and that all Nations were obliged to obſerve only thoſe ſeven ; but that God gave many more Commandments to the *Jews*, that he might make them much happier then other Nations. *Rabbi Joſeph* the Son of *Shem Tob* in his Book called *Kbod Elohim*, or the Glory of God, likewiſe ſaith, that tho' *Ariſtotle* (whoſe Book of *Ethicks* was in his opinion the beſt that ever was written) had omitted nothing which belonged to that Subject, and he himſelf had diligently Practiſed all he Writ, yet he could not be ſaved, becauſe

he

he embraced thoſe Doctrins he taught, as the dictates of reaſon, and not as divine and Prophetical Revelations. But theſe conceits are meer Fopperys, grounded neither upon reaſon or Scripture, and need no more confutation, then doth the opinion of ſome Men, who maintain that by natural light and reaſon, we cannot know any thing belonging to Salvation, a Tenet that cannot be rationally prov'd, by Men who do not allow themſelves any reaſon but what is corrupted and depraved, and if they boaſt of any thing above reaſon, 'tis meer Folly and far beneath reaſon, as ſufficiently appears by their manner of living: ſo that of this we need ſay no more, I will only add this, that no Man can be known but by his works, and therefore they that abound in the Fruits of Love, joy, peace, long ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance, *&c.* againſt whom ſaith *Paul* (*Galat. chap.* 5. *v.* 22.) there is no Law, whether they be taught by reaſon or Scripture, they are certainly taught of God, and are truly bleſſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of Miracles.

AS Men uſe to call that knowledge Divine, which exceeds human capacity and underſtanding; ſo when any thing is done in nature, of which the common People know not the cauſe, that they call the Work of God: for the vulgar believe Gods Power and Providence do moſt plainly appear, when they ſee any thing ſtrange and unuſual happen in nature, contrary to the cuſtomary opinion they have of Nature; eſpecially when that which happens, is for their benefit and advantage; and they think the being of a God never more clearly proved, then when nature ſeems not to keep its conſtant courſe; and therefore conclude, that thoſe Men deny the Being and Providence of God, who endeavour to explain and underſtand what they call Miracles by their natural cauſes. They indeed think, that while

while Nature goes on in her wonted courſe, God doth nothing, and on the contrary, when God Acts, the Power of Nature and Natural Cauſes are idle and at a ſtand: ſo that they imagin two numerical diſtinct Powers, namely the Power of God, and the Power of Nature appointed and directed (or as moſt Men now believe) Created by God; but what they mean by either, or what they underſtand by God and Nature, they know not, but fancy Gods Power to be like that of a great King. And the Power of Nature nothing but blind force and violence, the Common People therefore, call the extraordinary Works of Nature, Miracles, or the Works of God, and partly out of Devotion, partly out of a deſire to contradict thoſe that love the Study of Natural Sciences, they affect, being ignorant of Natural Cauſes, deſiring to hear of things they do not know, and thoſe things, which they leaſt know, they moſt admire: by taking away Natural Cauſes, and by imagining things out of the order of Nature, they think God is moſt adored when all things are immediately referr'd to his Power and Will; neither do they think the Power of God at any time ſo wonderful, as when according to their fancy, it conquers and ſubdues the Power of Nature. Which

Opinion

Opinion was first brought into the World by the *Jews*, who to convince the Heathen, that then Worshipt the Sun, Moon, the Earth, Water, Air, *&c.* told them their Gods were weak, inconstant, mutable, and subject to the Power of the invisible God; whose Miracles they proclaim'd, and by them endeavour'd to prove, that the whole frame of Nature was by the Power of that God whom they worshipt, created chiefly for their good and benefit: with which Opinion Men were so pleas'd, that ever since they have not ceased to fain Miracles, that they may be thought better beloved by God then others; and that the end and purpose of Gods making and preserving all things, was chiefly for their sakes. How arrogant is the fooliſh Vulgar who conceive nothing rightly of God or Nature, but confound the Ordinances of God, with the imaginations of Men, and think Nature so narrow, that they believe Man to be the principal part thereof. Having thus discovered the Opinions and Prejudices of the Common People concerning God and Nature, I will proceed in order, and shew first, that nothing can happen contrary to Nature, whose order and course, is eternal, constant and immutable, explaining also what is a Miracle. *Secondly*, that

that we cannot know the eſſence, exiſtence, nor conſequently the providence of God by Miracles, but they more manifeſtly appear, in the conſtant and unchangeable order of Nature. *Thirdly*, I will prove by ſome Scripture Examples, that the Scripture it ſelf, by the decrees, purpoſes and providence of God, means nothing elſe but that regular courſe of Nature, which neceſſarily follows from its eternal Laws. *Laſtly*, I will ſhew, how Scripture Miracles are to be interpreted, and what we are principally to obſerve in the Relations we have of Miracles: all which particulars, are the ſubject of this preſent *Chapter*, and will be very uſeful to the deſign of this whole Treatiſe. The firſt Particular is proved, by what we have ſaid in the *4th Chapter* Concerning the Divine Law, (namely) that whatſoever God willeth and decreeth, implyes eternal verity and neceſſity; for the Knowledge of God is not diſtinguiſht from his Will, and we ſay the ſame thing, when we ſay God willeth, and God knoweth any thing; becauſe by the ſame neceſſity, derived from the Nature and Perfection of God, whereby he knoweth any thing to be what it is, by the ſame neceſſity, muſt God will that thing to be what it is: but ſince nothing is neceſſarily true, but what is ſo by the Will

and

and Decree of God; it clearly follows, that the Universal Laws of Nature, are the very Ordinances of God, which flow from the necessity and perfection of his Divine Nature. Whatever therefore cometh to pass in Nature, which is repugnant to its Universal Laws, that must necessarily be contrary to the Decree and Knowledge of the Divine Nature; or if any one conclude that God doth any thing against the Laws of Nature, he likewise must grant, that God Acts contrary to his own Nature, which is the greatest of all Absurdities. As therefore nothing happens in Nature, contrary to its Universal Laws, so neither doth any thing happen, which doth not agree with, and follow from them; for whatever is done, is done by the Will and eternal Decree of God (that is) according to Laws and Rules, which imply eternal Verity and Necessity: and therefore tho' the Laws in which are contained eternal Verity and Necessity, be not known to us, yet Nature always observes them, and consequently keeps her constant and unchangeable course. No rational Man can believe the Power and Vertue of Nature to be limited, and its Laws confin'd to some particular Operations and Effects, and no t fitted Universally to all; for since the Power and Vertue of

Nature, is the very Vertue and Power of God; we ought to believe the Power of Nature infinite, and the Laws of Nature ſo general, that they extend themſelves to all things, which fall under the comprehenſion of the Divine Knowledge: otherwiſe it muſt be granted, that God Created Nature ſo weak and impotent, and its Laws and Rules ſo defective, that to preſerve and maintain Nature, he muſt upon every new occaſion aſſiſt and ſuccour it, that things may fall out according to his Will; which is very irrational for any Man to ſuppoſe. If then nothing happens in Nature, which doth not follow from its Rules and Laws, that its Laws are extended to all things within the compaſs of Divine Knowledge, and that Nature keeps a fixed immutable and regular Courſe; it is manifeſt that whatever Men call a Miracle, is only ſo in reſpect of their Opinions, and ſignifies nothing elſe but ſome work or thing done, of which we cannot diſcover the natural Cauſe, by an example of any thing that ordinarily happens like it; at leaſt the Perſon cannot, who relates or records the Miracle. I might call that a Miracle, whoſe cauſe cannot be made out from any natural Principles known by the Light of Nature; but becauſe Miracles were wrought according to the Capacity

pacity of the Vulgar, who knew not the principles of natural things, it is certain that the Antients counted that a Miracle, which they could not explain as the common People uſe to do natural things, namely, by recurring to their Memory, for bringing to mind ſome other thing of the like kind, which they did not admire: for the common People think, they very well underſtand a thing, when they do not admire it. By this Rule and no other, Men in old and later times, have judged of Miracles, and it is not to be doubted, but many things are related in Scripture for Miracles, whoſe cauſes might have been made manifeſt from the known principles of natural things, as we have hinted in our *2d Chapter*, where we ſpoke of the Suns ſtanding ſtill in the time of *Joſhua*, and its going backward in the time of *Hezekiah* on the Dyal of *Ahaz*, but of theſe things more at large, when I come to ſpeak of the Interpretation of Miracles. I will now go on to prove the Second particular, namely that we cannot by miracles underſtand the Eſſence, Exiſtence, or Providence of God, but that they are more clearly apprehended by us, in the fixed and immutable order of nature, which I thus prove. If the Exiſtence of God be not of it ſelf known to us, it muſt then be made out and con-

cluded, from Notions whoſe verity is ſo firm and unſhaken, that there cannot be a Power by which thoſe Notions may be changed, at leaſt, they ought to appear ſo to us at that time, when from them we conclude the exiſtence of God, if we will have that exiſtence to be indubitable: for if we could think thoſe Notions mutable by any Power whatever it be; then might we doubt of the Truth of thoſe Notions, and conſequently of our concluſion, namely God's Exiſtence; nor could we be certain of any thing, and ſeeing we cannot know what is congruous or contrary to Nature, but that which we prove to be congruous, or contrary to thoſe Prime Notions; if we could conceive any thing in Nature to be done, by any other Power whatever contrary to Nature, that muſt alſo be contrary to thoſe firſt Notions, and ſo be rejected as abſurd and againſt Reaſon; or elſe we muſt doubt of our prime Notions, and conſequently of God, and all things elſe. Miracles therefore in what manner ſoever we apprehend them, as they are underſtood to be Works contrary to the Order of Nature; are far from proving God's exiſtence, they rather bring it into Queſtion, for without Miracles vve may be aſſur'd of it, namely, by knovving that all things obſerve the certain and immutable

ble Order of Nature; but granting that to be a miracle, vvhich cannot be explained and made knovvn by natural Cauſes, vve ought then either to conclude, that it hath natural Cauſes, but ſuch as cannot be found out by Human Underſtanding, or that it hath no immediate Cauſe, but God or his Will; but if all things which are effected by Natural Cauſes, are done only by the Power and Will of God, we muſt neceſſarily at laſt come to this, that whether a Miracle have natural Cauſes or not, it is a Work which cannot be manifeſted by a Natural Cauſe (that is) 'tis a Work which exceeds Hnman Capacity, and from a Work that exceeds Human Underſtanding, we can underſtand and collect nothing: for whatever we clearly and diſtinctly underſtand, we do it by the thing it ſelf, or ſome other; and that which is clearly and diſtinctly underſtood by it ſelf, ought to be perfectly known to us; therefore by a miracle, or any Work exceeding Human Capacity, we cannot conceive God's Eſſence or Exiſtence, nor can we abſolutely underſtand any thing of God or Nature: but on the contrary, when we know all things to be ordained and eſtabliſht by God, and that the Operations of Nature neceſſarily flow from the Eſſence of God, and that the Laws of Nature, are the Eternal De-

crees and purpoſes of God; it muſt neceſſarily be concluded, that we ſo much the better know God and his Will, by how much the better we underſtand and know Natural Things, how they depend in their firſt Cauſe, and how they operate according to the Eternal Laws of Nature: So that in Reſpect of our Underſtanding, with much more Reaſon are thoſe Works to be called the Works of God and his Will, which we clearly and diſtinctly underſtand, then thoſe of which we are totally ignorant, tho' they ſtrangely effect our imagination, and cauſe our wonder; becauſe only thoſe Works of Nature, which we clearly and diſtinctly know, render our Knowledge of God more ſublime, and more evidently declare the Will and Decrees of God: So that thoſe *Men* do but trifle, who, when they do not underſtand a thing, run preſently to the Will of God, and ridiculouſly betray their own Ignorance, moreover, whatever we conclude from miracles, yet the Exiſtence of God cannot in any manner be concluded from them; for ſince a miracle is a limited Work, and expreſſeth only a certain and limited Power, we cannot from ſuch an Effect, conclude the Exiſtence of a Cauſe whoſe Power is infinite; but only of a Cauſe whoſe Power at moſt, is greater then that Effect.

I ſay at moſt, becauſe from many concuring Cauſes, there may follow an effect, whoſe Vertue and Power may be leſs then all the Cauſes together, and yet much greater then the Power of any one of thoſe Cauſes taken ſingle; but becauſe the Laws of Nature. As we have already ſhewn, extend themſelves to things Infinite, being conceived by us under a kind of Eternity, and Nature by them proceeds in a certain and unchangeable courſe; ſo far do thoſe Laws in ſome meaſure declare to us, the Eternity and Immutability of God; and therefore we conclude that neither God's Being or Providence, can be known by miracles; but may much better be concluded from the fixed and unalterable Courſe of Nature: I ſpeak now of a miracle, as it is taken for a Work that is above Human Capacity, or believ'd to be ſo; for as it is ſuppoſed to be a Work, that interrupts or perverts the Order of Nature, or is repugnant tc its Laws; it is ſo far from giving us any Knowledge of God, that it takes away, that which we naturally have, and makes us doubt of God and all other things. Nor do I know any difference between a thing done contrary to Nature, and that which is done above Nature (that is as ſome explain themſelves) a thing which is not done contrary to the Order of Nature,

but yet is not effected and produced by Nature: for seeing a miracle is not wrought out of Nature, but within the Compass of it; tho' it be concluded to be above Nature; yet it must necessarily interrupt Natures Order, which, by the Decrees of God, we conceived to be fixed and immutable; and therefore whatever is done in Nature, which doth not follow from the Rules of Nature, that must necessarily be repugnant to that Order, which God to all Eternity by Universal Laws establisht in Nature, and consequently, being against Nature, and its Laws, the believing it must bring all things into doubt, and lead us to Atheism, So that by what hath been said, I hope I have so proved the Second Particular, that we may again conclude a miracle, whether contrary to Nature or above it, to be a meer absurdity, and that by a miracle nothing can be understood in Scripture, but a Work of Nature, which is indeed above Human Understanding, or at least believed to be so. Before I proceed to the Third Particular, I resolve to prove from Scripture; that we cannot know God by Miracles: indeed the Scripture doth no where Litterally say so, but we may conclude it from the 13. *Chap.* of *Deut.* Where *Moses* commands the People to put any Prophet to death, who went about to seduce

ſeduce them: *And tho' the Sign, and the Wonder come to paſs whereof he ſpake unto thee, an yet thou ſhalt not hearken to the Words of the Prophet, for the Lord your God proveth you; that Prophet ſhall be put to death.* From whence it clearly follows, that miracles might be done by falſe Prophets, and unleſs men were fortifyed with the true Knowledge and Love of God; they might be induced by miracles to worſhip falſe Gods, as well as the true: *Moſes* adds, *becauſe the Lord your God proveth you to know, whether you love him with all your Heart, and with all your Soul.* The *Iſraelites* notwithſtanding all their miracles, had no right Notions of God, which appears by Experience; for in the Abſence of *Moſes*, they called upon *Aron* to make them viſible *Gods*, who to their Eternal ſhame, made them after ſo many Miracles done, a *Calf* to repreſent *God*. *Aſaph*, who had heard of ſo many miracles, yet doubted of God's Providence; and had he not at laſt underſtood what was true Happineſs, he had gone out of the right Way, *Pſalm.* 73. *Solomon* alſo in whoſe time the *Jews* were in their higheſt Proſperity, believed that all things happened by chance, *Eccleſ. Chap.* 3. *v.* 19, 20, 21. and *chap.* 9. *v.* 2, 3. The very Prophets themſelves, knew not how to reconcile the Courſe of Nature and Human Events, with the Notions they had of God's

God's Providence; but to Wiſemen whoſe Knowledge is not built on miracles, but upon clear and diſtinct conceptions, the thing is very evident, eſpecially to thoſe who place true Happineſs in Vertue and Tranquility of Mind; and ſtudy more to ſubmit to Nature, then to make Nature obedient to them; knowing certainly, that God directeth Nature as its own Univerſal Laws, and not as the particular Laws of Human Nature require; and that God hath a care not only of Mankind, but of the whole Frame of Nature in general; and it appears by Scripture, that miracles cannot teach us to know God or his Providence, tho' we find in Scripture that God wrought miracles to be known to *Men*. *Exod. Chap.* 10. *v.* 2. The wonders which he did in *Egypt*, were to convince the *Iſraelites*, that there was a God; yet it doth not follow, that the miracles themſelves taught them to know God, but only that the *Jews* were prepoſſeſt with ſuch Opinions, that they would eaſily be perſwaded by thoſe Signs: for as I have already ſhewed in the Second Chapter, that the conceptions, which the Prophets had by Revelation, were not drawn from Univerſal and common Notions; but from conceſſions ſometimes abſurd, and from the Opinions of thoſe, to whom the Revelations were

were made; and from theirs, whom the Holy Spirit would convince, as we have proved by many Examples, and the Teſtimony of *Paul*, who was to the *Jews* a *Jew*, and with the *Grecians* a *Greek*. But tho' thoſe *Miracles* were ſufficient to convince the *Iſraelites*, and the *Egyptians*, from their own Principles, that there was a God, yet they were not able to give them a right underſtanding and *Idea* of *God*; they underſtood nothing more by them, then that there was a Power greater, then all other known Beings, and that that Power took a particular care of the *Jews*, whoſe Affairs were at that time, ſo proſperous above all other Nations; but did not teach them, that God hath an equal care of all Mankind, which we know only by *Philoſophy* or true Wiſdom; and therefore the *Jews*, and all that knew nothing of God's Providence, but from the different State of Human Affairs, and from the diſparity of men's Fortunes, perſwaded themſelves, that the *Jews* were better beloved by God, then all other Nations; tho' they did not excel any other People in Human perfection, as we have already declared in our Third Chapter. We now proceed to the Third Particular, that is to prove by Scripture, that the Commands and Decrees of God, and conſequently his Providence, are indeed

deed nothing elſe, but the regular Courſe of Nature (that is) when the Scripture ſaith, any thing was done by God, or the Will of God, nothing more is to be underſtood, then that it was done according to the Order and Rules of Nature, and not as the Vulgar imagine, that Nature was idle and ceaſed from Action, or that the Order of Nature, was for ſometime interrupted. The Scripture doth not give us the true Knowledge of things, which do not concern its Doctrine, becauſe, as we have already declared, it needleſs, it meddles not with demonſtrating things by their natural Cauſes, nor with things that are meerly Speculative: and therefore to prove by conſequence, what we intend; we will quote ſome Scripture Hiſtories, whoſe Relations are fulleſt of Circumſtances. In the firſt Book of *Sam. Chap.* 9. *v.* 15, 16. It is ſaid, that God told *Samuel* in his Ear, that he would ſend *Saul* to him; and yet God did not ſend him, as Men uſe to ſend Meſſengers one to another, but this miſſion of God, was nothing but the Order and Courſe of Nature; for *Saul* ſought his Father's loſt *Aſſes*, and thinking he ſhould not find them; by Advice of his Father's Servant, he went to the Prophet *Samuel*, to know if he could tell him where they were; nor doth it appear any where in the whole Relation, that

Saul

Saul had any particular Command from God, beſide this natural Courſe to go to *Samuel*. *Pſal.* 105. *v.* 24. 'Tis ſaid, that God turned the Heart of the *Egyptians* to hate the *Iſraelites*: which turning was Natural; as appears by the firſt *Chap.* of *Exodus*, where very good Reaſons are given, for the *Egyptians* keeping the *Iſraelites* in ſubjection. In the *9th. Chap.* of *Gen. v.* 13. *God* ſaith to *Noah*, that he would ſet his Bow in the Cloud; which Action of God was nothing, but the Reflection and Refraction of the Sun-Beams, in the minute drops of Rain Water. *Pſal.* 147. *v.* 18. The natural Operation, and warmth of the Wind, by which, Froſt and Snow are melted, is called the Word of God; and *v.* 15. the Wind is called the Commandment of God, *Pſal.* 104. *v.* 4. The Wind and the Fire are called the Meſſengers and Miniſters of God, and many other like places in Scripture clearly ſhew, that the Decree, the Command, the Saying and Word of God, are nothing elſe but the Operation and Order of Nature; and without doubt many things which are related in Scripture, and attributed to God, naturally come to paſs; becauſe it was not the intent of Scripture, to give us an account of things by their natural Cauſes; but only to relate thoſe things which ſtrongly poſſeſs the imagi-

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nation, and in ſuch manner and ſtile, as was moſt likely to cauſe admiration and fill Mens minds with Devotion. If then we find in Scripture ſome things, of whoſe natural cauſes we are ignorant, or that ſeem to have happen'd againſt the order of nature; we are not preſently to doubt, but believe, that what did really happen, came to paſs by the courſe of nature; which is confirm'd by the many Circumſtances that accompany'd miracles, tho' the Circumſtances were not particularly related, or were at leaſt poetically related: I ſay the Circumſtances clearly prove, that the miracles required, and had natural cauſes. When the *Egyptians* were to be ſmitten with the Plague of boiles, *Moſes* was to caſt up and ſprinkle Aſhes into the Air, *Exod. chap.* 9. *v.* 10. The Locuſts alſo by Gods natural command, namely by an *Eaſt* Wind blowing a whole Day and Night, covered the Land of *Egypt*, and left it again with a ſtrong *Weſt* Wind, *Exod chap.* 10. *v.* 13. 19. By the command of God, was a way made through the Sea for the *Jews*, by an *Eaſt* Wind that blew a whole Night *Exod. chap.* 14. *v.* 21. when the Prophet *Eliſha* was to raiſe the Child, thought to be dead, he ſeveral times ſtretched himſelf upon the Body, till he grew warm and opened his Eyes, in the 2*d.* Book of *Kings*

chap.

chap. 4. *v.* 34, 35. ſo alſo in the 9*th. chap.* of St. *Johns Goſpel*, ſome Circumſtances are mentioned which Chriſt uſed, when he Cured the blind Man; many other things are related in Scripture, which all declare that miracles require ſomewhat more then the abſolute command of God; and therefore tho' all the Circumſtances of miracles and their natural cauſes, be not always particularly expreſt; yet we ought to believe, that miracles were not wrought without them. Which appears by the 14*th chap.* of *Exod.* *v.* 27. where it is ſaid, that only upon the ſtretching out of *Moſes*'s hand, the Sea returned again to its full ſtrength, without making mention of any Wind; yet in the 15 *chap.* of *Exod.* called *Moſes*'s *Song* *v.* 10. it is ſaid, *thou didſt blow with thy Wind* (that is a ſtrong Wind) *and the Sea covered them.* So that this Circumſtance was omitted in the Story, to make the miracle appear the greater: but ſome will urge, that we find many things in Scripture, which cannot in appearance be explain'd by natural cauſes; as that the ſins of Men may be the cauſe of the Earths Barrenneſs, and Mens Prayers the cauſe of its Fertility; that Faith may give ſight to the Blind, with other things of the like kind, recorded in the Old and New *Teſtament*: but to this I have already given Anſwer, in ſhewing that the Scripture,

ture, doth not give us the knowledge of things by their next immediate cauſes, but only relates things in that order, and expreſſeth them in ſuch Words and Phraſes, as are moſt likely to ſtir Men up, eſpecially the multitude to Devotion; and for that reaſon ſpeaks many times very improperly of God, and the things it treats of, not ſo much to convince our reaſon, as to affect and poſſeſs our minds, and our imaginations; if the Scripture ſhould relate the deſtruction of any Empire, in the ſame manner that Hiſtorians and Politicians uſe to do, it would not at all affect the Common People, but when the overthrow of a Kingdom is poetically deſcribed, and declared to be the immediate Work of God's own hand, how ſtrangely are Men moved with it? When the Scripture ſaith, that for the Sins of Men, the Earth is barren, or that blind Men are reſtored to ſight by Faith; it ſignifies no more then do thoſe other Sayings, that God is angry or grieved with our Sins, that he repents of the good he hath done, or intended, and that God by ſeeing a Sign called to mind his promiſe, all which Expreſſions are ſpoken poetically, or according to the Opinions and Prejudices of the Writer; ſo that we abſolutely conclude, that all things which the Scripture relates to have happen'd, did

happen

happen as all things do, according to the Laws of Nature; and if in Scripture there be any thing recorded which by plain and evident Demonſtration, may be proved to be repugnant to the Laws of Nature, or impoſſible to follow from them; we ought to believe it was inſerted by Sacrilegious Men; for whatever is againſt Nature, is againſt Reaſon, and whatever is againſt Reaſon, ought to be rejected as abſurd. Nothing now remains, but only to ſay ſomewhat of interpreting Miracles, or rather to recollect what hath been already ſaid, and illuſtrate it by ſome Example, which is the fourth Particular I promis'd to treat of. That no body by miſtaking a Miracle, may think there is ſomething in Scripture which is contrary to the Light of Nature. It ſeldom happens that Men relate any thing that comes to paſs ſo nakedly and truly, but that to their Relations they add ſomewhat of their own conceits; yea when they ſee or hear any thing, unleſs they beware of their own preconceived Opinions, they will be ſo far prepoſſeſt, that they will never rightly underſtand what they ſee or hear, eſpecially if what hath happen'd be above the Capacity of the Spectator or Relator, and it be for his advantage that the thing ſhould happen in that very man-

ner: hence it is that Men in their Hiſtories and Chronicles, rather vent their own Opinions, then make faithful Relations, and one and the ſame Matter of Fact, related by two Men of different Opinions, ſhall be ſo diverſly repreſented, that it ſhall ſeem two different Caſes: ſo that oft times it is not very difficult, by the very Hiſtories to diſcover what were the Opinions of the Hiſtorians: to Evidence this, I might cite many Philoſophers, who have Written Hiſtories of Nature, as well as Chronologers, but I will make uſe of only one mention'd in Scripture, and leave the Reader to judge of the reſt. In the time of *Joſhua*, when the *Jews* believed that the Sun was carryed about the Earth by a Dyurnal Motion, and that the Earth did not move at all, they fitted the Miracle which happen'd when they fought againſt the five Kings, according to this their preconceiv'd Opinion, and did not ſay ſimply, that the day was longer then ordinary, but that the Sun and Moon ſtood ſtill, or ceaſed from motion; which at that time ſerved as a very good Argument to convince the Heathen, who Worſhipped the Sun, that their God the Sun, was under the Power of another Deity, who could at his pleaſure make him change his Courſe; and therefore partly out of Religion, and partly

partly from the Opinion wherewith they were prepoſſeſt, they apprehended and related the thing much otherwiſe then indeed it was; therefore to explain Miracles and to underſtand by their relations, how things did truly and really happen, it is neceſſary to know the Opinions of thoſe, who firſt reported the Miracles, or left them in Writing, and to diſtinguiſh their Opinions, from that which was repreſented to them by their Sences, elſe we may confound their Judgments and Opinions, with the Miracle it ſelf: It is likewiſe neceſſary to know their Opinions, that we may not confound the things which really happen'd, with the things which were only imaginary, and but Prophetical Revelations; for many things in Scripture are related and believed as things real, which were but repreſentations and meer imaginations; as that God the firſt and higheſt of all Beings, deſcended from Heaven, *Exod. chap.* 19. *v.* 18. *Deut. chap.* 5. *v.* 23. upon Mount *Sinai*, and that the Mountain ſmoaked becauſe God came down upon it in the midſt of Fire: we are likewiſe told of *Eliahs* going to Heaven in a Fiery Chariot, with Horſes of Fire; all which were but repreſentations ſuted to the Opinions of them, who delivered to us thoſe things for realities; when in truth they were

but meer repreſentations; whoever is but little wiſer then the Multitude, knows that God hath neither Right or Left Hand, that he neither reſteth nor moveth, that he is comprehenſively in no place, but is infinite, and in him are contain'd all perfections. Theſe things I ſay are known to Men, who judge of things by the perceptions of a pure underſtanding and not as their Fancy is affected by their outward Sences; as is uſual with the Vulgar, who believe God to be Corporeal, and imagining he Exerciſeth Kingly Dominion, fancy his Throne to be in Heaven above the Stars, at no great diſtance from the Earth; to which and the like Opinions many Caſes in Scripture are Accommodated; but yet ought not to be thought real by Wiſe Men. Truly to underſtand how *M*iracles happen'd, it concerns us to know the Phraſes and Figures of the *Hebrew* Language; for he that is not well acquainted with them, will take many things in Scripture for *M*iracles, which were never thought ſo by the Penmen of it; ſo that he will not only be miſtaken in the Things and *M*iracles that happen'd, but will be likewiſe ignorant what was the meaning of thoſe by whom the Scripture was Originally Written (for Example.) The Prophet *Zachary chap.* 14. *v.* 7. ſpeaking of a future

future War ſaith, *but it ſhall be one day which ſhall be known to the Lord, nor Day nor Night, but it ſhall come to paſs that at the Evening time, it ſhall be Light*, in which words he ſeems to predict a great Miracle; but they ſignify no more, then that a doubtful Battle ſhould be fought, whereof the Succeſs ſhould be known only to God, but towards Evening the *Jews* ſhould be Victorious. In the like Phraſes and Expreſſions, the Prophets were wont to foretel and write the Victories and overthrows of the Nations, *Iſaiah. chap.* 13. *v.* 10. declareth the deſtruction of *Babylon* in theſe words, *the Stars of Heaven and the Conſtellations thereof ſhall not give their Light, the Sun ſhall be darkned in his going forth, and the Moon ſhall not cauſe her Light to ſhine*, which no body believes did happen in the deſtruction of that Empire, nor that which the Prophet adds. *v.* 13. *therefore will I ſhake the Heavens and the Earth ſhall remove out of her place.* In like manner, *Iſaiah chap.* 48. *v.* 21. *they thirſted not when he led them through the deſerts, he cauſed the Waters to flow out of the Rock, for them he clave the Rock alſo and the Waters guſhed out*; by which words nothing more is meant, then that the *Jews* found Fountains in the deſerts, by which they quenched their thirſt; for no ſuch *Miracles* hap-

pen'd, when by the conſent of *Cyrus* they returned to *Jeruſalem*, many expreſſions of like Nature, occur in the Scripture, and are only faſhions of ſpeaking amongſt the *Jewiſh* Nation; I need inſtance in no more, but let it be obſerved, that the *Jews* made uſe of ſuch Phraſes, not only for Ornament to their Language, but alſo to expreſs their Devotion; and therefore attributed all things to God; ſo that the Scripture ſeems to relate nothing but Miracles, even when it ſpeaks of things meerly natural. We are therefore to believe, that when the Scripture ſaith God hardened the Heart of *Pharaoh*, nothing more was ſignified, then that *Pharoah* was very obſtinate and diſobedient; and when it is ſaid, God opened the Windows of Heaven, nothing more is to be underſtood, then that there fell abundance of Rain: whoever then will but conſider, that many things in Scripture are related very briefly, imperfectly, and without Circumſtances, ſhall find nothing repugnant to natural Reaſon, but many things which ſeem very obſcure, may with a little Meditation be explain'd and eaſily underſtood: ſo that I think I have ſufficiently proved, what I intended: but before I put an end to this Chapter, I have thought fit to intimate, that in ſpeaking

of

of Miracles, I have taken a courſe different from that I made uſe of in treating of Propheſy; for I declared nothing poſitively concerning Propheſy, but what I could conclude from fundamental Principles revealed in the Scripture; but what I have ſaid concerning Miracles, I have drawn from Principles known by the Light of Nature, which I did deſignedly, becauſe I could not know wherein Propheſy conſiſted, nor could I aver any thing of it (it being a meer Theological queſtion exceeding human Capacity) but what I could derive from revealed Principles; ſo that I was forced to make a ſhort Hiſtorical Collection of Propheſy, and from thence to form ſome Maxims which might inſtruct me, as far as 'twas poſſible, in its Nature and Properties: but becauſe that which we inquire concerning Miracles, namely, whether any thing in Nature can happen which is either contrary to its Laws, or doth not follow from them, is a Philoſophical Subject, I thought it much better to clear the Queſtion, by making uſe of Principles known by the Light of Nature, as thoſe that are moſt obvious. I ſay I did it purpoſely, becauſe I can alſo prove it from fundamental Principles of Scripture, which declareth that the courſe and order of nature in general, is conſtant

and immutable, *Pſ.* 148. *v.* 6. *he alſo eſtabliſht them for ever and ever, he hath made a decree which ſhall not paſs.* and *Jerem. chap.* 31. *v.* 35, 36. *thus ſaith the Lord who giveth the Sun for a Light by Day, and the Ordinances of the Moon and the Stars for a Light by Night, which divideth the Sea when the Waves thereof roar; if theſe Ordinances depart from before me ſaith the Lord, then the Seed of* Iſrael *ſhall ceaſe alſo from being a Nation before me for ever:* the Philoſopher in his Book of *Eccleſiaſtes chap.* 1. *v.* 10. ſaith, *is there any thing whereof it may be ſaid, ſee this is new, it hath been already of old time, which was before us,* v. 11. he ſaith, *there is no remembrance of former things, neither ſhall there be any remembrance of things to come with thoſe that come after:* by which words he means, that nothing happens which hath not happen'd before, tho' it be forgotten; in the 3*d Chapter v.* 11. he ſaith that *God hath made every thing beautiful in its time,* and *v.* 14. he ſaith *whatever God doth, it ſhall be for ever, nothing can be put to it nor any thing taken from it,* v. 15. *that which hath been is now, and that which is to be, hath already been,* which clearly declares, that Nature keeps a conſtant fixed and unchangeable courſe, that God in all Ages known and unknown, is ſtill the ſame, that the Laws of Nature are ſo large

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and perfect, nothing can be added to, or taken from them, and laſtly that there is nothing new in Miracles, but what ſeems ſo to Mans ignorance, theſe things are expreſly declared in Scripture, but 'tis no where ſaid, that any thing happens in Nature, either contrary to its Laws, or not proceeding from them; ſo that Miracles require Cauſes and Circumſtances, and are not immediately wrought by I know not what Kingly and abſolute Empire, which the Vulgar attribute to God; but by his divine Power and Decree, manifeſted in the Laws and Order of Nature, and that Miracles may be wrought by ſeducing Impoſtures; as appears, *Deut. chap.* 13. and *Matth. chap.* 24. *v.* 24. from whence it manifeſtly follows, that Miracles were things natural, and therefore (to uſe *Solomons* expreſſion) are not to be thought new or contrary to Nature, but have as neer an Alliance as is poſſible, to natural things, which may be eaſily made out by the Rules I have laid down, drawn from the Scripture: but tho' I ſay we are taught theſe things by Scripture, yet I do not mean, that the Scripture delivers them to us as Doctrines neceſſary to Salvation, but only that the Prophets received them as we do, and therefore 'tis left to every Mans Liberty, to have ſuch an Opinion of them

them, as is moſt likely to incline him moſt religiouſly and heartily to ſerve God, and of this mind was *Joſephus*, for he concludes his Second Book of Antiquities with theſe words; *Neither ought any Man to marvel, at this ſo wonderful diſcourſe, that thorow the Red Sea a paſſage ſhould be found, to ſave ſo many Perſons in times paſt, and they rude and ſimple; whether it were done by the Will of God, or that it chanced of it ſelf; ſince not long time ago God ſo thinking it good, the Sea of* Pamphilia *divided it ſelf, to give way to* Alexander *King of* Macedons *Souldiers, having no other paſſage, to deſtroy the Empire of the* Perſians, *and this all acknowledge, who have Written the Acts of* Alexander, *and therefore of theſe things let every one think as he pleaſeth.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Interpretation of Scripture.

MOst Men acknowledge the Holy Scripture to be the Word of God, which teacheth Mankind the way to true Happineſs and Salvation; but this Opinion hath ſo little influence upon Mens Lives, that the common People take no care, to regulate theirs according to the Doctrines of Scripture; and every Man believing himſelf divinely inſpired, would under pretence of Religion, compel all others to be of his Opinion. We often ſee thoſe whom we call Divines, very ſolicitous to father their own Fancies upon Scripture, and the Divine Authority thereof, making no ſcruple with great boldneſs to interpret it, and tell us what is the mind of the Holy Ghoſt. When they meet with any difficulties, they do not

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ſo much fear miſtaking the Holy Spirits meaning, and the right way to Salvation; as to be found guilty of Error, and by looſing their Authority to fall into contempt; but if Men did heartily believe that which they profeſs concerning the Scriptures, they would lead other kind of Lives, there would not be half ſo much contention and hatred in the World as now there is; nor would Men with ſo much Blind Zeal and boldneſs, venture upon expounding Scripture, and introduce ſo many novelties into Religion; but on the contrary, would be very cautious of maintaining any thing for Scripture Doctrine, which is not manifeſtly contained in it, and the Men who have not been affraid to adulterate Scripture in ſo many places, would never have commited ſuch impious Sacriledge. But ambition and wickedneſs have ſo far prevailed, that Religion doth now conſiſt, not ſo much in obeying the dictates of the Holy Spirit, as in defending Mens own fantaſtical opinions; Charity is now no part of Religion, but diſcord and implacable hatred paſs under the maſque of Godly Zeal. To theſe evils ſuperſtition hath joyned it ſelf, teaching Men to deſpiſe reaſon and nature, and to admire and reverence

verence that only which is repugnant to both; 'tis no wonder that Men to be thought the greater admirers of Scripture, ſhould Study ſo to expound it, that it may ſeem contradictory both to nature and reaſon, and therefore dream of profound miſteries hidden in it, which miſteries (that is their own obſurdities) they labour and weary themſelves to find out; and neglecting things which are of moſt uſe, aſcribe to the Holy Spirit, all the Dotages of their own imagination, and with much heat and paſſion, endeavor to defend their own idle conceits. Whatever is the reſult of Mens underſtanding, that Men endeavor to maintain by clear and pure reaſon, but all opinions derived from their paſſions and affections, muſt be defended by them to avoid theſe troubles, and to free our minds from all Theological prejudices, that we may not raſhly receive the Fooliſh inventions of Men, for the Doctrins of God; I will now treat of a right method of interpreting Scripture, of which method whoever is ignorant, he can never certainly know the true Senſe and meaning, either of the Scripture or the Holy Ghoſt. I ſay in few Words, that the method of interpreting Scripture, doth not differ from the method of interpreting nature; for as the

method

method of explaining nature, cheifly conſiſts in framing a Hiſtory thereof, from whence, as from undeniable conceſſions, ſhall follow the definitions of natural things; ſo likewiſe to expound Scripture, it is abſolutely neceſſary to compoſe a true Hiſtory thereof, that thence, as from ſure Principles, we may by rational conſequences collect the meaning of thoſe who were Authors of the Scripture, that every one (who admits of no other Principles or conceſſions in expounding Scripture, or in reaſoning of the things therein contain'd, but ſuch as are fetcht from the Scripture it ſelf, or the Hiſtory of it) may proceed without danger of Erring, and be able to diſcourſe and reaſon as ſecurely of things which exceed human capacity, as of any thing we know by natural light. Now that it may evidently appear, that this is the only ſure way, and agrees with the method of explaining nature, we are to obſerve, that the Scripture very often treats of things, that cannot be deduced from Principles known to us by natural light; becauſe Revelations make up the greateſt part of Scripture Hiſtory, which Principaly contains Miracles; that is (as we have already ſhew'd in the foregoing Chapter) narrations of things not common or uſual in nature, ſuted and fitted to the judgment and

and opinions of the Hiſtorians that wrote them: Revelations alſo as we have ſhew'd in the Second Chapter, were accomodated to the opinions of the Prophets, and exceed human capacity, wherefore the knowledge of all theſe things (that is) of almoſt every thing contained in Scripture, ought to be derived only from Scripture, as the knowledge of natural things ought to be from nature: as for moral Doctrins contained in the Bible, tho' they may be demonſtrated from common and general Notions, yet it doth not appear by thoſe Notions, that the Scripture teacheth thoſe Doctrins; nothing but the Scripture it ſelf makes out that, and to give a clear demonſtration of the Scripture's Divinity, we muſt from the Scripture it ſelf, prove the Truth of the Moral Doctrins which it teacheth, becauſe in that Truth only, the Divine Authority of Scripture appears; for as we have already ſhewn, the certainty of the Prophets, conſiſted in their being juſt and vertuous, which to make us believe them, ought likewiſe appear to us. We have already ſhewn that Miracles cannot prove the Divine Nature of God, and that they might be wrought by falſe Prophets. the Divine Authority of Scripture appears then, in its teaching us what is true and real Vertue, and that can be

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proved only by Scripture it ſelf, if not, we could not without a great deal of prejudice believe the Scriptures, and think them to be of divine inſpiration: the Scripture indeed, doth not give us any definition of the things whereof it treats, ſo neither doth Nature; and therefore as from ſeveral Actions of Nature, we make definitions of natural things; in the ſame manner, from ſeveral narrations of all things contained in Scripture, are concluſions to be drawn. The general rule then of interpreting Scripture is, that we conclude nothing to be Doctrine, which doth not manifeſtly and clearly appear, from the Hiſtory of Scripture; what kind of Hiſtory it ought to be, and what are the Principal things it ought to contain, comes now to be declared.

Firſt, it ought to contain the Nature and Proprieties of that Language in which the Books of Scripture were Originally Written, and which the Authors of thoſe Books were wont to ſpeak; that ſo all the Senſes which every Speech, according to the ordinary uſe of ſpeaking will bear and admit, may be found out; and becauſe the Pen-Men both of the Old and New *Teſtament* were *Jews*, the knowledge of the *Hebrew Tongue*, is above all things neceſſary,

ceſſary, to underſtand not only the Books of the Old *Teſtament*, which were Written in *Hebrew*, but alſo of the new; for tho' ſome of the Books of the New *Teſtament*, were Publiſhed in other Languages, yet they are full of *Hebrewiſms*.

Secondly, The Sentences of every Book, ought to be Collected and reduced to Heads; that ſo all that concern one and the ſame Subject, may be eaſily found, and all thoſe which ſeem doubtful and obſcure, or repugnant to one another, ought to be noted: I call all thoſe Speeches clear or obſcure, whoſe Senſe is eaſily or difficultly made out by the context, and not in reſpect of the Truth of thoſe Speeches, eaſily or difficultly perceived by reaſon; for only the Senſe of what the Scripture ſaith, and not the verity is our buſineſs; we are therefore to take ſpecial heed, that in ſearching out the Senſe of Scripture, we do not ſuffer our reaſon, as it is founded upon the Principles of natural knowledge, to be prepoſſeſt with prejudice; and likewiſe that we do not confound the true Senſe of the words, with the verity of the matter; for the true Senſe is to be found out, only by the uſe of the Language, or by ſuch a way of reaſoning, as is grounded only upon Scripture. That all theſe things

may be perfectly underſtood. Take this example for illuſtration; Theſe ſayings of *Moſes God is Fire*, and *God is jealous* how plain and clear are they, ſo long as we regard only the ſignification of the words, but in reſpect of reaſon and truth, how dark and obſcure, yea tho' the litteral Senſe of the words be contrary to natural reaſon, yet unleſs it contradict any fundamental Principles derived from Scripture, their litteral Senſe is ſtill to be retained, ſo on the contrary, if theſe ſayings in their litteral conſtruction, ſhould be found repugnant to Principles deduced from Scripture, tho' they ſhould be moſt agreeable to reaſon, yet they ought to be Metaphorically not litteraly underſtood. To know then whether *Moſes* did, or did not believe God to be Fire, we ought not to conclude the one or the other, becauſe the Opinion is either contrary or conſonant to reaſon, but it muſt be gathered from ſome other of *Moſes* own ſayings (for example) becauſe *Moſes* in very many places hath plainly declared, that God is not like any viſible thing, either in Heaven, Earth, or the Waters, we muſt conclude that either this ſaying, *God is Fire*, or elſe all his other ſayings are to be Metaphorically interpreted, but becauſe we ought as ſeldom as 'tis poſſible, to depart from the litteral Senſe,

Senſe, we muſt therefore inquire whether this ſaying *God is Fire* will admit of any other Senſe beſide the litteral, (that is) whether the word *Fire* ſignify any other thing beſide natural *Fire*, and if in the *Hebrew Tongue*, it can never be found to ſignify any thing elſe, then this ſaying of *Moſes* is no other way to be interpreted, tho' it be repugnant to reaſon: but on the other ſide all thoſe other ſayings of *Moſes*, tho' conſentaneous to reaſon, are to be conformable and accomodate to this; but if the common uſe of the Language will not ſuffer this to be done, then thoſe ſeveral ſayings are Irreconcileable, and we are to ſuſpend our judgment of them. But now becauſe the Word *Fire*, is alſo taken for anger and jealouſy, *Job. chap.* 31. *v.* 12. theſe ſayings of *Moſes* are eaſily reconcileable, and we may lawfully conclude, that theſe two Sentences *God is Fire*, and *God is jealous* ſignify both the ſame thing.

Moreover, becauſe *Moſes* plainly ſaith, God is jealous, and doth no where declare that God is free from all manner of paſſion and affections of the mind, we may conclude that *Moſes* did think, or at leaſt taught other Men to think, God was jealous, tho' we believe the opinion contrary to reaſon: for as we have already ſhewn, it is not lawful for us, to wreſt the Senſe

and meaning of Scripture, according to the dictates of our reaſon or preconceived Opinions, becauſe all our knowledge both of the Old and New *Teſtament*, muſt be derived only from themſelves.

Thirdly, This Hiſtory of Scripture, ought to give ſuch an account of the Books of the Prophets remaining with us, as may inform us, of the Lives, Manners and Studies of the Authors of every Book; who the Perſon was, upon what occaſion he wrote, in what time, to whom; and in what Language, and *Laſtly*, it ought to tell us, what was the Fortune of every Book, how it was firſt received, into whoſe hands it fell, how many various readings it had, how it came to be received for ſacred and Canonical. And *Laſtly*, how all the ſeveral B ooks came together into one Volume; I ſay all theſe things this Hiſtory of Scripture ought to contain. To know what Sentences of Scripture are to be taken for Laws and precepts, and what only for moral Doctrins, it is very expedient to know the Life, Manners, and Study of the Author; beſide we can with more eaſe know, the meaning of any Mans Words, when we know his genius, diſpoſition and ingenuity. Moreover, that we may not confound Doctrins whoſe morality and Obligation is perpetual, with thoſe that were

were but temporary, and of uſe only to ſome particular People; it behoveth us to know, upon what occaſion, at what time, to what Nation, in what Age, all theſe inſtructions were Written. *Laſtly*, it is fit we ſhould know, beſide the Authority of every Book, whether the Books have been adulterated, or at leaſt whether any Errors have crept into them, and whether they have been corrected by Learned and Faithful Men, all which things are abſolutely neceſſary to be known, that we may not with Blind Zeal receive every thing obtruded upon us, but believe that only, which is certain, plain, and paſt all doubt.

After we have ſuch a Hiſtory of Scripture, and have firmly reſolved to conclude nothing to be the Doctrine of the Prophets, which doth not naturally follow, or may be clearly drawn from this Hiſtory; then it will be time to prepare our ſelves, to ſearch out the meaning of the Prophets, and of the Holy Ghoſt; which to do, the like method and order is required, that is to be uſed in interpreting nature by its own Hiſtory; for as in ſearching out natural things, we firſt endeavour to inquire concerning that which is Univerſal, and common to all nature, as Motion and Reſt; and the Laws and

Rules of both, which nature always obſerves, and by which it continually Acts, and from theſe we afterwards by degrees proceed to other things leſs general; ſo likewiſe from this Hiſtory of Scripture, we are firſt to inquire after that which is moſt general, and is the Baſis and Foundation of all Scripture, and is commended by all the Prophets, for the moſt profitable and perpetual Doctrine to Mankind (for example) that there is only one omnipotent God, who only is to be worſhipt, who provideth for all, and loveth thoſe beſt, who ſerve him and love their Neighbours as themſelves, is a Doctrine every where ſo expreſs and plain in Scripture, that no Body ever doubted the Senſe and meaning thereof; but what God is, why and in what manner he beholdeth and provideth for all things, the Scripture doth no where expreſly and poſitively declare, nor teach it as an eternal Doctrine, but on the contrary, the Prophets as we have already ſhewn, did not agree amongſt themſelves concerning theſe things, and therefore in matters of like nature, we are not poſitively to determin what is the Doctrine and meaning of the Holy Spirit, tho' it may be very well made out by natural knowledge. This general Doctrine of the Scripture, being rightly known, we

are then to paſs on to things leſs Univerſal, which concern the common uſe of Life, and which are derived like rivulets from this general Doctrine. Such are all the particular external Actions of real Vertue, which cannot be Practiced but as occaſion is offer'd, and whatſoever in Scripture relating to them ſeems doubtful or obſcure, muſt be explain'd and determin'd by the Univerſal Doctrine; and for thoſe things which ſeem contradictory one to another, we are to examin. Upon what occaſion, at what time, and to whom they were written (for example) when Chriſt ſaid, *Bleſſed are they that mourn for they ſhall be comforted.* We know not who are the Mourners meant in this Text; but becauſe Chriſt afterwards, bids us take no thought for any thing, but ſeek the Kingdom of God and the righteouſneſs thereof, which he commends to us as our cheifeſt good, *Math. chap. 6. v. 33.* therefore it follows, that the Mourners meant by Chriſt, muſt be thoſe who lamented to ſee the Kingdom of God and its righteouſneſs, ſo much neglected by Men; for which no others could Mourn, but thoſe whoſe affections were Heavenly, and contemned all things here below. So alſo when Chriſt ſaid *Math. chap. 5. v. 39. Whatſoever ſhall ſmite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the*

other alſo, if he had ſpoken this as a Law-giver, by this command he had abrogated the Law of *Moſes*, which he declareth in the *17th verſe*, he came not to deſtroy, but fulfil: We are therefore to inquire, who ſaid this, to whom, and when he ſaid it. *Firſt*, it was Chriſt that ſaid it, not as a Law-giver who ordained Laws; but as a teacher, who gave moral inſtructions, not ſo much to reprove their deeds, as to correct their thoughts: next he ſpoke it to Men oppreſt, who lived in a Common-wealth extreamly corrupted, where juſtice was neglected, and whoſe ruine and deſtruction was near at hand: this Doctrin of Chriſt, was likewiſe Preached by the Prophet *Jeremy*, before the firſt deſtruction of the City of *Jeruſalem*, *Lament. Chap.* 3. *v.* 30. *He giveth his Cheek to him that ſmiteth him.* Wherefore ſeeing the Prophets did not teach this Doctrine, but in the time of oppreſſion, nor was any where commanded by them as a Law; and on the contrary *Moſes* (who did not write in times of oppreſſion, but took care to eſtabliſh a good Common-wealth) tho' he condemned revenge, and the hating of our Neighbour, yet he commanded, that an Eye ſhould be given for an Eye: hence it appears by the fundamental Principles of Scripture, that this Doctrine of *Chriſt* and

Jeremy,

Jeremy, for ſuffering Injuries and ſubmitting to Wicked Men, ought to be practiſed only in times of oppreſſion, and in Places where Juſtice is not ſo eaſily to be had; but not in a good Common-Wealth, becauſe in good Governments, where Juſtice is maintain'd, every Man is obliged if he will be Juſt, to require Satisfaction for Injuries before a Judge, *Levit. Chap.* 5. *v.* 1. Not upon the ſcore of Hatred and Revenge, which are forbidden, *Levit. Chap.* 19. *v.* 17, 18. But to preſerve and maintain the Juſtice and Laws of a Man's Country, and that wicked Men may not get advantage, and thrive by their wickedneſs, all which is agreeable to Natural Reaſon: to this purpoſe, I could bring many more Examples, but theſe are ſufficient to explain my meaning, and ſhew the uſefulneſs of that method, which is the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe. But hitherto I have only ſhewn, the Way to find out the Senſe of thoſe Scripture Sentences, which concern the Uſe of Life; and are therefore more eaſily underſtood; becauſe among the Penmen of the Bible, there never was any controverſy about them; but other paſſages in Scripture which concern Matters meerly Speculative, are not ſo plain and obvious, becauſe the Way to them is very narrow; for tho' in things meerly

meerly Speculative, the Prophets as we have already ſhewn, differ'd amongſt themſelves, and the narrations of things, were ſuited to the prejudice of every Age, yet it is not at all Lawful for us to determine, what was the meaning of one Prophet, by the clear Places of another; unleſs it be evident to us, that they were both of one Opinion: how then the meaning of the Prophets, in ſuch Caſes is to be known by the Hiſtory of Scripture, I will in few words declare; we muſt in the firſt Place, begin with what is moſt general, and from thoſe Sentences of Scripture, which are moſt plain and clear, inquire what is Propheſy or Revelation, and in what it chiefly conſiſts. Next we ought to inquire, what a Miracle is, and after that of things uſual and common; this being done, we ought to conſider the Opinions of every Prophet, and from them gueſs at the meaning of every Propheſy, Hiſtory and Miracle: but what caution we are to uſe, that in theſe things we do not confound the Senſe of the Prophets and Hiſtorians, with the meaning of the Holy Spirit, and the Truth of the Matter, I have already ſhewn in their proper Places. But this is to be noted concerning the meaning of Revelations, that this my method teacheth us, to find out only thoſe things, which the Prophets heard

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or ſaw, and not what they ſignified and repreſented to us by Figures an Hieroglyphicks; of theſe things we can only make Conjectures, but cannot certainly derive them from the fundamental Principles of Scripture. Now though I have ſhewn the manner of interpreting Scripture, and proved it to be the ſure way of finding out the Senſe thereof; yet indeed I confeſs thoſe Men may have a more certain Knowledge of the true meaning of it (if any ſuch Men there be) who have received a Traditional Explication thereof, made by the Prophets themſelves (which the *Phariſees* affirm they have) or ſuch as have a high *Prieſt*, who cannot err in expounding Scripture, and that the *Roman Catholics* boaſt of their *Popes*: but ſeeing we cannot be ſure of ſuch a Tradition, or the Authority of ſuch a *Prieſt* or *Pope*, we cannot build upon either, becauſe the Primitive *Chriſtians* deny the one, and the moſt Antient Sects of the *Jews* the other. And if we conſider the Series and Succeſſion of Years, which the *Phariſees* received from their *Rabbies*, by which they carry their Tradition as high as *Moſes* himſelf, we ſhall find it falſe, as I have proved in another place: ſuch a Tradition therefore, ought to be much ſuſpected, and tho' in our method, we are forced to ſuppoſe ſome kind of *Jewiſh* Tradition to be ſincere

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and uncorrupt, namely, the Signification of words in the *Hebrew* Tongue, which we have received from the *Jews*, yet we need not much doubt this, tho' we very well may the other; for it can be of no Advantage or Uſe to any Man, to change the Signification of any Word, tho' it often may be, to alter the Senſe of a Speech. It is alſo very difficult to be done, for he that ſhould endeavor to change the Senſe of any Word, muſt neceſſarily conſtrue all thoſe Authors, who have written in that Tongue, and uſed that Word in its common acceptation, according to the Genuine Senſe of every Author; or elſe muſt falſify them with a great deal of Caution. The ignorant multitude as well as Learned Men, are the keepers of a Language, but the Learned only preſerve the Senſe of Speeches and Books, and conſequently, tho' Learned men may change or corrupt the Senſe of ſome ſcarce Book; yet they cannot the Signification of Words: beſide if any man had a mind to alter the Signification of a Word, to which he is accuſtomed, he cannot without a great deal of difficulty do it, either in ſpeaking or writing. For theſe and other Reaſons I am perſwaded, it never yet came into any man's head to corrupt a Language, tho' many have perverted the Senſe of a writer,

either

either by changing or misinterpreting his ſayings. If our method (which layeth this for a ground, that the knowledge of Scripture, is to be drawn only from the Scripture) be plain and true; then where it is not able to give us the true Senſe and Knowledge of Scripture, we may well deſpair of it: what difficulty there is of arriving by this method to the true Meaning and Knowledge of the Sacred Volumes, or what is further to be deſired in it, I will now declare. The chiefeſt difficulty in this method is, that it requireth a perfect Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Tongue, but how is that to be had? the Antient and moſt skilful Maſters in the *Hebrew* Language, have left little to poſterity of the Elements and Learning of it; we have from them neither Dictionary, Grammar, or Rhetoric. The *Jewiſh* Nation hath loſt all its Ornaments and Beauty (which is no wonder having ſuffer'd ſo many Calamities and Perſecutions) and retains nothing but a few Fragments of their Language, and of a few Books, for all the names of Fruits, Birds, Fiſhes, and many other things, by the Injury of time are loſt. So that the Signification of many Names and Words, in the Old and New Teſtament, is unknown or very diſputable. Seeing then all theſe things, and likewiſe a Dictionary of the

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Hebrew Phraſes, and manners of ſpeaking in the *Hebrew* Language, are very neceſſary to be had, becauſe all the Forms of Speech peculiar to the *Jewiſh* Nation are forgotten and loſt; we cannot as we would find out all the Senſes of every Sentence in Scripture, which according to the cuſtomary uſe of the Language it comprehends, and there are many Sayings in Scripture, tho' expreſt in known words, whoſe Senſe nevertheleſs is obſcure and inſcrutable, and as we have no perfect Hiſtory of the *Hebrew* Tongue, ſo the Nature and Conſtitution of the Language is ſuch, and ſo many Ambiguities ſpring from it; that 'tis impoſſible to frame ſuch a method, as ſhall direct a Man to find out the true Senſe of all that is ſaid in Scripture: for beſide the Cauſes of Doubt common to all other Languages, there are ſome others in this, from whence proceed many uncertainties, which cauſes here to ſpecify, I think worth a Man's pains.

Firſt, Obſcurity and ambiguity in Scripture, is cauſed ſometimes by uſing the Letters of the ſame Organ one for another. The *Jews* divided all the Letters of their Alphabet into five Claſſes or Forms, becauſe there are five particular Parts or Inſtruments of the Mouth uſed in pronunciation: the Lips, the Tongue, the Teeth, the Palate,

Palate, and the Throat; for Example *Alpha*, *Ghet*, *Hgain*, *He*, are called Guttural Letters, and are without any difference known to us, taken one for another. *El* which ſignifies *To*, is often taken for *Hgal*, which ſignifies *upon*, and ſo interchangebly; whence it cometh to paſs, that all the Parts of a Speech are rendred doubtful, or are like words which have no Signification. The *Second* cauſe of ambiguity, is the divers and manifold Signification of conjunctions and Adverbs; for example, *Vau* promiſcuouſly ſerves to joyn and diſjoyn, ſignifying And, but, becauſe, indeed, otherwiſe, then, *Ki* hath ſeven or eight Significations, becauſe, although, if, when, even, as, that, burning, and ſo almoſt all Particles.

The *Third* cauſe of many Ambiguities is, becauſe Verbs in the Indicative Mood, want the Preſent, the Preterimperfect, the Preterpluperfect and the Future tenſe, and others much uſed in other Languages. In the Imparative and Infinitive Mood, they want all the Tenſes except the Preſent, and in the Subjunctive have none at all; and tho' all theſe defects of Moods and Tenſes, may with great Elegancy be ſupplyed, by Rules and Principles deduced from the Language; yet they have been wholly neglected by the Antient Writers,

Writers, who promiſcuouſly uſed the Preſent and Preterperfect tenſes for the Future; and ſometimes the Indicative Mood for the Imperative and Subjunctive; which cauſed great Ambiguity in their Writings: beſide theſe three great Cauſes of uncertainty in the *Hebrew* Language, there remain two other very obſervable, and both of very great moment. The firſt is, that the *Jews* made no uſe of thoſe Letters we call Vowels. The Second, that they never uſed in their Writings to diſtinguiſh their Words, or expreſs their quantity, by any *Marks* or *Signs*; and tho' both *Vowels* and *Marks* uſe to be ſupplyed by *Points* and *Accents*, yet we cannot truſt to them, ſeeing they were invented, and brought into uſe by modern Men; whoſe Authority is of no great Value. The Antients wrote without Points, that is without *Vowels* or *Accents*, as appears by many Teſtimonies, but ſome of later times brought in both, to interpret the Bible as they thought fit; ſo that the *Points* and *Accents*, which we now have, are only Expoſitions of Men of the preſent Age, whom we ought not to reverence and believe above other Expoſitors: they that are Ignorant of this, know not the Reaſon, why the Author of the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews* is to be excuſed, that in the 21*th. Verſe* of the 11*th. Chap.* of that *Epiſtle*,

Epiſtle, he explains the Text in the 31*th*. *Verſe* of the 47*th*. *Chap*. of *Geneſis* quite otherwiſe, then it is in the pointed *Hebrew* Text; as if the *Apoſtle* had been to learn the Senſe of Scripture from the Punctiſts, in my Opinion the Punctiſts are miſtaken; that it may appear they are, and that the difference of the two interpretations, ariſeth from the want of *Vowels*, I will give you both: The Punctiſts by their Points render the Text in *Geneſis* thus, and *Iſrael* bowed himſelf *Uppon* (or by changing *hgain* into *Aleph*, a Letter of the ſame Organ) *towards* the Beds Head; but the Author of the *Epiſtle* ſaith, *Iſrael* bowed himſelf leaning *Uppon* the top of his Staff, by reading *Mateh*, inſteadof the Word *Mitah*, which difference cometn only from the *Vowels*. Now ſeeing the forecited *Chapter* of *Geneſis*, ſpeaketh only of *Jacob's* Age, and not of his Sickneſs as doth the following *Chapter*, it is much more probable the Hiſtorian meant, that *Jacob* leaned *Uppon* the top of his Staff (wherewith Men of very great Age uſe to ſupport themſelves) and not that he did bow himſelf *uppon* or *towards* his Beds Head; becauſe in ſo rendring the Text, there is no need to ſuppoſe any interchange of Letters. By this Example, I have not only reconciled that Place in the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, with

the Text in *Geneſis*, but have alſo ſhewn how little credit is to be given to our new *Points* and *Accents*; ſo that he who will interpret Scripture without prejudice, muſt with a great deal of doubting narrowly examin them.

To return to our purpoſe, every one may eaſily conjecture, that from ſuch a Nature and Conſtitution of the *Hebrew* Tongue, muſt proceed ſo many Ambiguities, that 'tis impoſſible for any method to reſolve them all; and there is little hope it can be done, by the mutual comparing of one ſaying with another (which we have declared to be a ſingular way of finding out the true, of many Senſes, which every Sentence according to the common uſe of the Language, will bear and admit.) Seeing this comparing of Places, cannot explain one another but by meer chance; becauſe no Prophet wrote with expreſs Intention, to explain the Words of another Prophet or his own; and alſo becauſe we cannot know one *Prophet's* or *Apoſtle's* meaning by anothers, unleſs it be in things that concern the uſe of Life; but not when they ſpeak of things Speculative, and when they relate Miracles or Hiſtories: moreover, I can give you many Inſtances of Speeches in Scripture, that are inexplicable, but at preſent I paſs them by, and proceed

proceed to obſerve, what other difficulties yet remain, in this method of interpreting Scripture, and what is further to be wiſht for in it. Another difficulty attends this method, becauſe we have not ſuch a Hiſtory of all the Books of Scripture as is neceſſary; for we know not the Authors, or rather the Pen-men of many of the Books; at leaſt we doubt of them, as I ſhall at large ſhew in the following *Chapter*; neither do we know, upon what Occaſion, or when thoſe Books of whoſe Pen-men we doubt, were written, we are ignorant into what Hands all the Books fell, nor know we in whoſe Copies ſo many various Readings are found, and whether there be not ſome, which have more various Readings: what advantage it is to know all theſe things, I have briefly declared in its proper place; but I have there purpoſely omitted ſome things, which come now to be conſidered, if we read any Book, that contains things incredible, unintelligible, or written in very obſcure Terms, and know not who was its Author, or at what time or upon what occaſion it was written; in vain do we labour to find out the true Senſe thereof, for none of theſe things being known, 'tis impoſſible to underſtand, what the Author did or could mean: but when we are once ſatisfyed in theſe things, our Thoughts de-

mine without prejudice, and give to the Author, or to him in whoſe Favour the Author writ, neither more or leſs then is his due; nor do we think of any other things, then were or might be in the Author's mind, and ſuch as the time and occaſion requir'd: and this is apparent, for it often happens, when in divers Books, we read ſtories one like another, we paſs different Judgments on them, according to the different Opinions we have of the Writers. I remember I have read in a certain Book, of a Man called *Orlando furioſo*, who rid upon a winged *Monſter* through the *Air*, into what Countries he pleas'd, and ſlew a great Number of Men and Giants, with abundance of other Fancies beyond all Reaſon and Senſe. A ſtory like this I have read in *Ovid* of *Perſeus*, and another in the Book of *Judges* and *Kings* of *Sampſon*, who ſingle and unarmed ſlew Thouſands of Men, and of *Eliah* who with a Chariot and Horſes of Fire, mounted up to Heaven; theſe ſtories I ſay are like one another, yet we make different judgments of every one of them. The firſt Author wrote nothing but Fables, the *Second* matters Political, and the *Third* Sacred, and this for no other reaſon, but the different opinions we have of the writers. It is therefore evi-

dent,

dent, that the knowledge of thoſe Authors, who have written things obſcure and very difficult to be underſtood, is abſolutely neceſſary to interpret their writings, and among ſeveral readings of obſcure Hiſtories, that we may chuſe the true, 'tis neceſſary to know in whoſe Copies thoſe diverſe readings are found, and whether many other readings have not been met with, amongſt Men of greater Authority.

Laſtly, we meet with another difficulty in expounding ſome Books of Scripture, by not having thoſe Books in the ſame Language wherein they were firſt written; for 'tis the common opinion, that the Goſpel according to St. *Mathew*, and the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, were written in the *Hebrew Tongue*, which Copies are no where extant. In what Language the Book of *Job* was written is a doubt, *Abenezra* in his Commentaries, affirms it was Tranſlated out of ſome other Language into *Hebrew*, which is the cauſe of its obſcurity: Of the Apocryphal Books I ſay nothing, becauſe they are of little or no Authority. Theſe are all the difficulties in this method of interpreting Scripture by ſuch a Hiſtory as might be had of it, of which I promiſed to give an account, and I think them ſo great, that I may boldly

ſay, we cannot know the true ſenſe of Scripture in many places, or at moſt, we can without any certainty but gueſs at it; however this is to be obſerved, that all thoſe difficulties can only hinder us, from knowing the mind of the Prophets in things imperceptible, which we can only imagin, but not in things intelligible, of which we may form clear conceptions: for things which in their own nature are eaſily conceived, can never be ſpoken ſo obſcurely, but that they may be quickly underſtood, according to that uſual ſaying a Word to the Wiſe. *Euclyd* who writ of nothing but what is very plain and obvious, is eaſily underſtood by every Body in any Language, and therefore to be ſure of his Senſe and meaning, there is no need of a perfect, but only a ſuperficial knowledge of the Tongue wherein he wrote, nor of knowing his Life, Study, Manners, in what Language, when, or to whom he wrote, neither of knowing the Fate of his Book, its various readings, or how it came to be generally received; what I ſay of *Euclyd*, may be ſaid of all Men, who have written of things in their own nature eaſy to be underſtood; ſo that we conclude, the meaning of the Scriptnre, and the true Senſe thereof, concerning moral Doctrins, may be eaſily attained,

tained, by ſuch a Hiſtory as might be compoſed of it: For all Leſſons of true Piety, are given us in words of common and frequent uſe, and are therefore plain and eaſy to be underſtood; and becauſe our happineſs and the peace of our Lives, conſiſts in Tranquillity of Mind, which we find only in things which we clearly underſtand; it evidently follows, that we may certainly find out the meaning of Scripture, in things neceſſary to happineſs and Salvation; and therefore we need not be ſo Sollicitous about other matters, which when they ſeem ſo difficult to our reaſon and underſtanding, have more curioſity in them then profit. I have now ſhewn what is the true method of explaining Scripture, and fully declared my opinion concerning it, I doubt not but every one ſees, this method requires nothing more then natural reaſon, whoſe Nature and Vertue cheifly conſiſts in deducing by right conſequences, things obſcure from known and indiſputable conceſſions; and tho' we grant, that this natural light is not ſufficient to find out all things in Scripture, it is not from any defect in this natural light, but becauſe the right way which it ſhews us, was never obſerved and troden by Men: So that in tract of time, it is become painful, and almoſt

impoſſible to paſs, as in my opinion manifeſtly appears by the difficulties I have mentioned. It now remains that I examin thoſe Mens opinions, who are not of mine: the firſt to be conſidered is theirs, who poſitively affirm, that natural light is not ſufficient to interpret Scripture, and that only Supernatural light can do it; but what they mean by Supernatural light, I leave them to explain: I ſuppoſe they do but in obſcure terms confeſs, that they are very doubtful of the true Senſe of Scripture, for if we diligently conſider their expoſitions, we ſhall find they contain nothing Supernatural; yea they will appear to be meer conjectures, if they be compared with their explanations, who pretend to nothing more then what is natural; they will be found like them to be human, long Studied and Elaborate. In maintaining that natural light is not able to explain Scripture they are miſtaken, what we have ſaid makes it clear, that the difficulty of expounding Scripture doth not ariſe from any defect of ſtrength in natural light; but only from Mens ſloth (I will not ſay malice) who have neglected to Compoſe ſuch a Hiſtory of Scripture, as might have been framed of it; and alſo becauſe all Men (if I be not deceived) confeſs, that Supernatural light is a divine gift

gift beſtowed only upon believers; but the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* Preached not only to believers but to wicked unbelievers, who were notwithſtanding their impiety and unbelief, capable of underſtanding the meaning of the *Prophets*; otherwiſe they had Preached but to Children and Infants, and not to Men endued with reaſon: and *Moſes* had in vain preſcribed Laws, if his Laws were intelligible only to believers who needed no Law. Wherefore they that ſeek after ſupernatural light to underſtand the mind of the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, ſeem void even of natural light, and ſuch I think are far from having that Heavenly Gift of light ſupernatural. *Maimonides* was not of theſe Mens Opinion, for he thought moſt places of Scripture would bear ſeveral, yea contrary Senſes, and thought likewiſe, that we cannot be certain of the true Senſe of any place, unleſs we know the place as we interpret it, to contain nothing but what is agreeable to reaſon, or not contrary to it; for if in its litteral Senſe it appear repugnant to reaſon, tho' the Senſe appear clear, yet he thinks the place ought to be otherwiſe interpreted; and this he plainly declares in the 25*th* Chapter of his Book called *More Nebuchin*, where he ſaith *know that I do not refuſe to ſay the World*

World is eternal becauſe there are Texts in Scripture which ſay the World was created, for the Texts which declare the World was created, are not more then thoſe that tell us God is Corporeal, neither are the ways of expounding thoſe Texts, concerning the Creation of the World, Shut up or barred againſt us; but we could as well explain them, as I did the other when I proved God to be incorporeal; perhaps I could better and with more eaſe expound the Texts of the Worlds Creation, and maintain the World to be eternal, then I did thoſe of Gods corporiety, when I proved God to be incorporeal; but for two reaſons I will not do it, or believe that the World is eternal: Firſt becauſe it is evident by a clear Demonſtration, that God is not Corporeal, for all places of Scripture whoſe litteral Senſe is repugnant to a Demonſtration, require explication, becauſe it is certain they ought not to be taken litterally, but the eternity of the World is not proved by any Demonſtration, and therefore it is not neceſſary to offer violence to the Scripture, and wreſt it by expoſitions, to maintain an opinion that is but probable, when we may with any reaſon maintain the contrary opinion. The ſecond reaſon is, becauſe believing God to be incorporeal, is not contrary to the Fundamentals of the Law, but to believe the eternity of the World, as Ariſtotle *did, deſtroyeth the very Foundation*

of

of the Law. Theſe are the Words of *Maimonides*, from which that manifeſtly follows which I ſaid before: for if he were convinced by reaſon, that the World was eternal, he would not ſcruple to wreſt the Scripture and make ſuch expoſitions of it, as might ſupport that opinion; and he would be preſently certain, that the Scripture tho' it every where plainly ſay the contrary, did declare the World to be eternal, and conſequently, could never be certain of the true Senſe of Scripture, tho' never ſo plain; ſo long as he doubted the Truth of the thing; or that the Truth were not evident to him, for ſo long as the Truth of a thing is not apparent, we are ſo long ignorant whether the thing be agreeable or contrary to reaſon, and conſequently, we know not whether the litteral Senſe be true or falſe; which opinion if it were true, I would abſolutely grant, that ſome other light, beſide what is natural, is neceſſary for us to interpret Scripture: for moſt of the things we meet with in it, cannot be deduced from Principles known by natural reaſon (as we have already ſhewn) and therefore the Truth of them cannot be made manifeſt, by the ſtrength of natural reaſon; and conſequently the true Senſe and meaning of the Scripture, cannot appear to us without ſome other light.

light. Moreover, if this opinon were true, the common People who are ignorant of, or at leaſt do not mind Demonſtrations, would entertain no Scripture but what they received from the Authority or Teſtimony of *Philoſophers*; and conſequently ought to ſuppoſe, *Philoſophers* cannot Err in the interpretation of Scripture; which truly would be a new Eccleſiaſtical Authority, and a kind of Prieſthood which the vulgar would rather ſcorn then reverence. And tho' our method require the knowledge of the *Hebrew Tongue*, which the vulgar have no time to Study; nothing can upon that Score be objected, for the common People of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* Preached, underſtood the Language of the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, and by it underſtood the meaning of the *Prophets*, tho' not the reaſons of the things they Preached, which according to the opinion of *Maimonides*, they ought to have known, to make themſelves capable of underſtanding the *Prophets* meaning. It doth not follow from the rule of our method, that the common People muſt neceſſarily rely upon the Teſtimony of interpreters, for I have given an inſtance of a People, that knew the Language of the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*: but *Maimonides* can never

never ſhew me a common People, that knew the cauſes of things, which he ſays was the knowledge whereby the mindof the *Prophets* was to be underſtood, and as for the common People of theſe days, we have already ſhewn, that all things neceſſary to Salvation, tho' the reaſons of them be not known, may be eaſily underſtood in any Languge, becauſe they are ſo common and ordinary, and for this knowledge the vulgar do not depend upon the Teſtimony of interpreters; in other things they follow the Fortune of the Learned. But to return to a ſtricter examination of *Maimonides* opinion, firſt he ſuppoſeth that the Prophets did in all things agree one with another, and that they were moſt excellent *Philoſophers*, becauſe as he will have it, their concluſions were drawn from the Truth of things, but this I have proved in my *Second* Chapter to be falſe. Next he ſuppoſeth, that the Senſe of Scripture cannot be made out by Scripture, for as much as it doth not Demonſtrate any thing, nor doth it prove the things of which it Treats by definition and Primary Cauſes, wherefore according to the opinion of *Maimonides*, the true Senſe of Scripture can neither appear or be deduced from Scripture: But I have likewiſe proved this to be falſe, in the preſent

ſent Chapter ; For I have made it appear, both from reaſon and examples, that the Senſe of Scripture is found out only by Scripture, and to be derived thence, even when it ſpeaks of things unknown to us by natural light. *Laſtly*, *Maimonides* ſuppoſeth that it is Lawful for us, according to our preconceived opinions, to expound and wreſt the Words of Scripture, and to deny or change the litteral Senſe thereof be it never ſo expreſs and plain ; which Liberty is Diametrically oppoſite, to what I have Demonſtrated in this and other Chapters, and Savors of too much boldneſs : but ſhould I grant him this Liberty, what advantage will he get by it ? none at all, for thoſe things which cannot be Demonſtrated, make up the greateſt part of Scripture, we cannot by this way make out, nor by this rule expound or interpret them, when on the contrary by following our method, we may explain many things of this kind, and as we have already ſhewn, ſafely diſpute of them, but thoſe things which are in their own nature perceptible, their Senſe is eaſily drawn from the context, and as *Maimonides* method is unprofitable, ſo it takes from the common People all certainty, which they, and all that follow any other method, can by diligent reading have of the Senſe of Scripture ; and therefore we re-

Senſe

ject it as dangerous, uſeleſs, and abſurd, as for the forementioned Tradition of the *Phariſees*, we know not that there is any ſuch, and as for the Popes Authority, I for no other reaſon deny it, but becauſe it wants clear Proof, for had they as much Scripture to ſhew for it, as heretofore the *Jewiſh* High Prieſts had for theirs, I ſhould be as little concerned that ſome of the *Popes* of *Rome*, have been Hereticks and wicked Men, as that the High-Prieſts of the *Jews* were ſometimes as bad, and yet by the command of Scripture, had ſtill the Power of interpreting the Law; as appears by the 17 *chap.* of *Deut. v.* 11, 12. *chap.* 33. *v.* 10. and *Mal. chap.* 2. *v.* 7, 8. But becauſe the Popes can ſhew us no ſuch Teſtimony, their Authority is very much to be doubted, and that no Man may deceive himſelf, and think that according to the example of the *Jewiſh* High-Prieſts, the *Catholic* Religion alſo wants a High Prieſt, it is to be obſerved, that the Laws of *Moſes* were the public Laws of the Country, and needed a public Authority to maintain them; for if every Man have a Liberty of interpreting the public Laws as he pleaſeth, no Common-wealth can ſtand, but preſently diſſolves, and public Laws become private: but in Religion the Caſe is quite different; for ſeeing Religion doth not ſo much conſiſt in external Actions, as in Truth

Truth and Singleneſs of Heart, it is of no Public Power or Authority; for Truth and Sincerity of mind is not infuſed by the command of Laws, or by public Authority, and no Man can be compell'd by force or by Laws, to be made holy, nothing but good brotherly Council, education, and a mans own free judgment can do that. Seeing then every Man hath right to think of Religion as he pleaſeth, and it cannot be imagin'd any Man can part with this right; it is in every Mans Power to judge of Religion, and conſequently to expound and interpret it to himſelf; for as the cheif Power of interpreting Laws, and judging of Public Matters, reſides in the Magiſtrate upon no other account, but becauſe they are public; ſo likewiſe for the ſame reaſon, the Supream Authority of explaining and judging of Religion, is in every particular Perſon, becauſe it is every private Mans right. The Authority then of the *Jewiſh* High-Prieſt to interpret Laws, is far from proving the Popes Authority to interpret Religion but rather the contrary that every particular Man hath right to do it; So that it is evident our method of interpreting Scripture is the beſt, for ſeeing the ſupream Power of interpreting it, ought to be that natural reaſon which is common to

all

all Men, and not any Supernatural light or external Authority; this method ought not be ſo difficult and abſtruſe, that none but acute *Philoſophers* can make uſe of or Compoſe it, but it muſt be fitted and proportion'd, to Mens underſtanding and capacity, as I have proved mine to be, the difficulties that are in it, have proceeded from Mens ſloth and negligence, not from the nature of the Method.

CHAP. VIII.

Sheweth that the Pentateuk, *Books of* Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, *and the* Kings, *were not Written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear, and then inquires whether the Writers of all theſe Books were diverſe Perſons, or but one, and who?*

IN the former Chapter, we have ſpoken of the Foundations and Principles of the Knowledge of the Scriptures; and we have ſhewn them to be nothing elſe, but a true Hiſtory of the Scripture, which Hiſtory, tho' very neceſſary, the Antients neglected to compoſe, or at leaſt if they Writ

Writ or left any by Tradition, it perish-ed by the injury of time; and conſe-quently a great part of the Fundamentals and Principles of Scripture-knowledge was loſt; which loſs however had been more tollerable, if Men of ſucceeding Ages had kept themſelves within their true bounds, and had faithfully delivered to their Suc-ceſſors, thoſe few Principles which they received or found out, and had not out of their own Brains forged new, whereby the Hiſtory of Scripture is not only im-perfect, but remains full of Errors, and the Foundations of Scripture Knowledge, are not only ſo few that a perfect Hiſtory cannot be built on them, but they are alſo very faulty and defective. To rectify this, and remove the common prejudices in Divinity, is my purpoſe, but I fear I go about it too late, for things are now al-moſt come to that heigth, Men in this point will endure no correction, but ob-ſtinately defend whatever they have em-braced under the form of Religion; Rea-ſon prevailing with very few, ſo univer-ſally have theſe prejudices ſpread them-ſelves in the Minds of Men. I will never-theleſs endeavour and try what I can do, becauſe the buſineſs is not abſolutely deſ-perate: that I may in order ſhew what theſe prejudices are, I will begin with

thoſe which concern the Penmen of thoſe Books that are accounted ſacred, and firſt concerning the Writer of the five Books of *Moſes*, commonly called the *Pentateuk*. Men have generally believed, that they were Written by *Moſes* himſelf, and the *Phariſees* ſo ſtifly defended this Opinion, that they counted him a Heretic that thought otherwiſe: and for this Reaſon *Aben Ezra* a Perſon of an ingenuous diſpoſition, and no mean Learning, being the firſt I read of who took notice of this miſtake, durſt not plainly declare his thoughts, but only hinted his Opinion in obſcure Words, which I will not ſcruple to explain, and give you their naked meaning. *Aben Ezra*'s Words in his comment upon *Deutronomy* are theſe. Beyond *Jordan*.... *Now thou mayeſt underſtand the Miſtery of twelve and* Moſes *alſo wrote the Law and the* Cananite *was then in the Land, in the Mount of the Lord ſhall it be ſeen, behold his Bedſted was a Bedſted of Iron then ſhalt thou know the Truth*, by theſe few Words he ſhews and plainly declares, that it was not *Moſes*, but ſome other Perſon that lived long after him, who wrote the *Pentateuk*; and that *Moſes* wrote ſome other Book, to make this appear his firſt Obſervation is, that the Preface of *Deutronomy* which begins thus, *Theſe be the words of* Moſes

Moſes *which he ſpake unto all* Iſrael *beyond* Jordan, could not be Written by *Moſes* who never paſſed *Jordan.* His ſecond Obſervation is, that the Book which *Moſes* wrote was fairly Copyed out in the compaſs of one Altar, as appears *Deut. chap.* 27. *v.* 5, 8. *Joſh. chap.* 8. *v.* 31, 32. which Altar the *Rabbins* declare, was made only of twelve Stones; from whence it follows, that the Book which *Moſes* Writ, was a Volume much leſs then the *Pentateuk*; and this I think *Aben Ezra* meant by the miſtery of twelve, unleſs perhaps he underſtood thoſe twelve Curſes which are in the forementioned 27*th Chapter* of *Deutronomy*, which he might believe were not Written in the Book of the Law, and therefore beſide the Writing of the Law, commanded the *Levites* to repeat thoſe Curſes, that they might by Oath bind the People to obſerve the Written Laws, or elſe perhaps he meant the laſt *Chapter* of *Deutronomy*, that ſpeaks of *Moſes*'s Death; which *Chapter* conſiſts only of twelve *Verſes:* but theſe and other things which are ſpoken only by gueſs, need not a more curious Examination. The third Obſervation is, that 'tis ſaid *Deut. chap.* 31. *v.* 9. *Moſes wrote this Law and delivered it*, &c. which could not be the words of *Moſes*, but of ſome other Perſon declaring what *Moſes*

did, and what he wrote. His fourth Obſervation is that place *Gen. chap.* 12. *v.* 6. where it is ſaid, ſpeaking of *Abraham* paſſing through *Canaan*, *that the* Cananite *was then in the Land*, which words muſt be Written after *Moſes*'s Death, when the *Cananites* were driven out, and did not poſſeſs the Land; and this muſt likewiſe be the meaning of *Aben Ezra*'s commenting upon this place in theſe words; *And the* Cananite *was then in the Land*, it ſeems that *Canaan* Nephew to *Noah*, took that Land from ſome others who poſſeſſed it, if not, then there is a great miſtery in the thing, whoſoever underſtands it, let him be ſilent (that is) if *Canaan* invaded thoſe Countries, then the meaning of thoſe Words the *Cananite* was then in the Land, muſt be that there was a time paſt when the Land was inhabited by another Nation, but if *Canaan* were the firſt who lived in that Country (as appears by the 10*th. Chap.* of *Gen.* he was) then the words muſt imply, that in the time of the Perſon, who wrote the Book of *Geneſis*, the *Cananites* were not in the Land; ſo that *Moſes* could not be the Writer of it, becauſe in his time the *Cananites* were ſtill in the Poſſeſſion of that Country; and this is that *Miſtery*, he would not have made public. His *Fifth* Obſervation is that which is in the 22*th chap.*

Gen.

Gen. v. 14 where ſpeaking of Mount *Moriah*, the Text ſaith, *it is ſaid to this day in the Mountain of the Lord ſhall it be ſeen*: now it was not called the Mountain of the Lord, till after it was dedicated to the Building of the Temple, and this choice of the Mountain was not made in the time of *Moſes*, who did not ſpeak of any place choſen by God, but only foretels that God would in time to come, chuſe a place which ſhould bear Gods Name. His ſixth Obſervation is what is ſaid, *Deut. chap.* 3. ſpeaking of *Og* King of *Baſan*, theſe words are interpoſed, *v.* 11*th. for only* Og *King of* Baſan *remained of the remnant of the* Gyants *behold his Bedſted was a Bedſted of Iron is it not in* Rabbah *of the Children of* Ammon? *Nine Cubits was the length thereof*, which Parentheſis clearly ſhews, that the Writer of theſe Books lived long after *Moſes*, for this manner of ſpeaking argues, that the Perſon related what paſt long ago, and to obtain credit, ſhewed ſome Antient Reliques. Without queſtion this Bedſted, was firſt found in the time of *David*, who Conquered this City, as is declared in the 30*th Verſe* of the 12 *Chap.* of the ſecond Book of *Samuel* and not only here, but a little after, the Hiſtorian, to *Moſes* words adds theſe in the 14*th Verſe*, Jair *the Son of* Manaſſeh *took all the Coun-*

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try of Argob *unto the coaſts of* Jeſhuri *and* Maachathi, *and called them after his own name* Baſhan, Haveth, Jair, *unto this day*; theſe Words I ſay were added by the Hiſtorian, to explain *Moſes*'s Words in the 13*th Verſe*, *and the reſt of* Gilead *and all* Baſhan *being the Kingdom of* Og, *gave I unto the half Tribe of* Manaſſeh, *all the Region of* Argob, *with all* Baſhan *which is called the Land of the* Gyants, and therefore the Hiſtorian was forced to explain what thoſe places were, which were antiently ſo called, and alſo to give a reaſon why in his time they were called by the name of *Jair*, who was of the Tribe of *Judah* and not of *Manaſſeh*, as appears by the 2*d Chap.* of the 1*ſt* Book of the *Chron. v.* 21, 22. We have now explained *Aben Ezra*'s meaning, and alſo thoſe places in the *Pentateuk* quoted by him, to make good his Opinion; but indeed he hath not taken notice of all, nor of the principal places, for there are more of greater moment which I will now mention: *Firſt*, the Writer of theſe Books doth not only ſpeak of *Moſes* in the third Perſon, but alſo teſtifies many things of him, namely God ſpake with *Moſes*, God ſpake with him face to face, *Moſes* was the meekeſt of all Men, *Numb. chap.* 12. *v.* 3. *Now the Man* Moſes *was very Meek above all Men upon the Face*

of

of the Earth, Moſes *was wroth with the Officers of the Hoſt*, Numb. chap. 31. v. 14. Moſes *the Man of God*, Deut. chap. 33. v. 1. Moſes *the Servant of the Lord dyed*, Deut. chap. 34. v. 5. *And there aroſe not a Prophet ſince in* Iſrael *like unto* Moſes. *v.* 10. but in *Deutronomy* where the Law which *Moſes* wrote and declared to the People is ſet down, *Moſes* ſpeaketh and tells them what he did in the firſt Perſon, *Deut. chap.* 2. *v.* 1, 17. *The Lord ſpake unto me and I prayed unto the Lord*, but then again after the Hiſtorian had repeated *Moſes*'s words, he goes on and again ſpeaks in the third Perſon, declaring how *Moſes* delivered to the People in Writing that Law which he had publiſhed. *Laſtly*, the Hiſtorian relates, how *Moſes* warned and admoniſhed the People and ended his Life; all which, namely the manner of ſpeaking, the Teſtimony and Character given of *Moſes*, with the context of the whole Hiſtory, fully ſatisfy that the Books were not Written by *Moſes*, but by ſome other Perſon. *Secondly*, it is to be obſerved, that this Hiſtory doth not only relate, how *Moſes* dyed, was buryed, and that the *Jews* Mourned thirty Days for him; but making likewiſe a Compariſon between him and all the other Prophets that lived after him, ſaith, he excelled them all, *Deut.*

chap. 24. *v.* 10. *and there aroſe not a Prophet ſince in* Iſrael *like unto* Moſes *whom the Lord knew face to face.* Which as it is a Teſtimony that *Moſes* could not give of himſelf, ſo could no other Man who immediately followed him, but it muſt neceſſarily be one, who lived many Ages after him; becauſe he ſpeaketh of the time paſt, ſaying there aroſe not a Prophet ſince, and of his Burial he ſaith, no Man knoweth of his Sepulchre unto this day. *Thirdly*, it is to be Noted, that the Hiſtory calls ſome places by Names, which they had not in *Moſes*'s time, but by others given them long after, *Gen. chap.* 14. *v.* 14. it is ſaid *Abraham* purſued his Enemies unto *Dan*, which name was never given to that City till long after the Death of *Joſhua*, as appears by *Judg. chap.* 18. *v.* 29. *and they called the Name of the City* Dan, *after the Name of* Dan *their Father who was Born unto* Iſrael, *how be it the Name of the City was* Laiſh *at the firſt. Fifthly*,, it is to be obſerved, that the Hiſtories are continued for a longer time then *Moſes* lived; for *Exod. chap.* 16. *v.* 35. *it is ſaid the Children of* Iſrael *did eat Manna forty Years until they came to the Borders of the Land of* Canaan, namely till the time mentioned, *Joſh. chap.* 5. *v.* 12. In the Book of *Gen.* 36. *v.* 31. *Theſe are the Kings that Reigned in the Land of* Edom *before there*

there reigned any King over the Children of Iſrael: the Hiſtorian without doubt there declareth, what Kings the *Edomites* had before *David* Conquer'd them, and ſet Governours over them; as appears in the 2*d* Book of *Sam. chap.* 6. *v.* 11, 14. by all this it is as clear as day, that the *Pentateuk* was not Written by *Moſes*, but by ſome other who lived many Ages after him. But let us conſider the Books which *Moſes* wrote, and are mention'd in the *Pentateuk*: *Firſt*, it appears, *Exod. chap.* 17. *v.* 14. God commanded *Moſes* to write the War againſt *Amalek*, but in what Book it doth not appear, *Numb. chap.* 21. *v.* 10. there is a Book mentioned called the Wars of the Lord, wherein without queſtion *Moſes* gave a full Relation of the War againſt *Amalek*, and alſo of all thoſe Encampings or pitching their Tents, which the Author of the *Pentateuk* ſaith, *Numb. chap.* 33. *v.* 2. were deſcribed by *Moſes*; it likewiſe appears, *Exod.* 24. *v.* 4, 7. that *Moſes* wrote another Book, called the Book of the Covenant, which he read to the People when they firſt made a Covenant with the Lord, but this Book or Epiſtle contained very few things, the Laws only or Commands of God recited in *Exod.* from the 22 *Verſe* of the 20. *chap.* to *chap.* 24, which no body will deny, who without

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out partiality and with any ſound Judgment reads that Chapter; it is there declared, that as ſoon as *Moſes* underſtood the Peoples readineſs to enter into a Covenant with the Lord, he wrote the Oracles and Laws of God in a Book, and early in the Morning, certain Ceremonies being performed, he read to all the Congregation the Condition of the Covenant, which being read and underſtood by all the People, they with a general Conſent obliged themſelves to all that God Commanded; ſo that conſidering the ſhortneſs of the time in which it was Written, and the manner of making the Covenant, the Book could contain no more then the few things I have mentioned. *Laſtly*, it appears, that *Moſes* in the fortieth Year after their going out of *Egypt*, explained all thoſe Laws which he had preſcribed, as may be ſeen, *Deut. chap.* 1. *v.* 5. and again obliged the People to the obſervance of them, *Deut. chap.* 29. *v.* 14. and then wrote a Book which contained thoſe Laws ſo explain'd, and the New Covenant, *Chap.* 31. *v.* 9. which was called the Book of the Law of God, to which *Joſhua* made an Addition, by regiſtring that agreement, whereby the People in his time, obliged themſelves and entered a third time into Covenant with the Lord, *Joſh. chap.* 24. *v.* 25, 26. but becauſe we have no Book extant

tant either of the Covenant of *Moſes* or *Joſhua*, it muſt neceſſarily be granted, that the Book periſhed, unleſs we will be as mad as the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt *Jonatan*, and wreſt the Scripture as we pleaſe; for he being preſt with this difficulty, choſe rather to corrupt the Scripture then confeſs his Ignorance; for thoſe words in the 26. *v.* of the 24. *chap.* of *Joſh.* Joſhua *wrote theſe words in the Book of the the Law of God*, &c. he render'd thus in his *Chaldee* Tranſlation. And *Joſhua* wrote theſe words, and kept them with the Book of the Law of God, there is no medling with Men, who will ſee nothing but what they liſt, is not this denying what is Scripture, and forging new at our pleaſure! We then conclude, that this Book of the Law of God, was not the *Pentateuk*, but quite another; which the Author of the *Pentateuk* hath orderly interwoven with his work; as appears by what hath been and ſhall be further ſaid: where the forecited place in *Deutronomy* ſaith, that *Moſes* wrote a Book of the Law, the Hiſtorian adds, that he delivered it to the Prieſts, and commanded them at certain ſet times to read it before all the People: which implyes that the Book muſt be much leſs then the *Pentateuk*, ſeeing at one meeting it might be read all over and underſtood by the People: nor can we here forbear to obſerve,

that

that of all the Books Written by *Moſes*, this only of the ſecond Covenant and his Song (which he afterwards Writ for all the People to Learn) he commanded to be Religiouſly kept; becauſe the firſt Covenant obliged only thoſe that were preſent, and the ſecond not only all preſent but their poſterity alſo, *Deut. chap.* 29. *v.* 14, 15. He therefore commanded this Book of the ſecond Covenant, to be carefully and Religiouſly preſerved to future Ages, and alſo his Song; becauſe future Ages were chiefly concern'd in it. Seeing then it is not evident, that *Moſes* ever writ any Books beſide the Book of the Law and his Song, which he commanded to be kept, and that many things in the *Pentateuk* could not be Written by him; I conclude that no Man can upon any good ground, but muſt altogether againſt reaſon, make *Moſes* the Author of the *Pentateuk* but ſome body may perhaps here ask, whether *Moſes* beſides theſe Books did not write the Laws when they were firſt revealed to him (that is) whether in the ſpace of forty Years, he did not ſet down in Writing any of thoſe Laws which he preſcribed, beſide thoſe few contain'd in the Book of the firſt Covenant: to this I anſwer, that tho' I ſhould grant it to be very agreeable to reaſon, that *Moſes* ſhould commit to Writing, thoſe Laws which he

he Communicated to the People, at the ſame time and place, when and where they were publiſht; yet I deny that it is lawful upon this Ground to affirm he did; for I have already ſhewn, we ought in like Caſes to determin nothing, but what is manifeſtly proved, either by Scripture it ſelf, or by conſequences drawn from the Principles of it, and not becauſe a thing ſeems Conſonant to Reaſon; for Reaſon it ſelf doth not oblige us to be poſſitive: It may be the Senate of Seventy Elders communicated to the People *Moſes's* Edicts in writing, which were afterwards collected, by him that writ the *Pentateuk*, and were orderly inſerted into the Hiſtory of *Moſes's* Life; and ſo much for the five Books of *Moſes*. It is now time to examin the reſt, the Book of *Joſhuah* for like Reaſons could not be written by *Joſhua*, it muſt be ſome other Perſon, that gives ſo good a Character of him in ſeveral places of that Book; *Joſh. Chap.* 6. *v.* 27. *The Lord was with Joſhua, and his Fame was noiſed throughout all the Country, that he omitted nothing, but did all that Moſes commanded, Chap.* 8. *v.* 35. *Chap.* 11. *v.* 15. *That he waxed Old, called all the People together, and at laſt dyed.* Moreover ſome things are related which happen'd after his Death; namely, that the People continued to worſhip God as long as the Old men lived, who knew

knew *Joſhua*. In the 16. *Chap. v.* 10. It is ſaid, *that Ephraim and Manaſſeh did not drive out the Cananites, that dwelt in Gezur, but the Cananites dwell among the Ephramites to this day, and ſerve under Tribute.* Which is the ſame Expreſſion we find in the firſt *chap.* of *Judges. v.* 21. *But the Jebuzites dwell with the Children of Benjamin in Jeruſalem unto this day.* Which manner of ſpeaking implies, the Writer relates what was long ago paſt, as appears *Joſh. Chap.* 15. *Verſe* the *laſt, the Jebuzites dwell with the Children of Judah unto this day.* The ſame Expreſſion is likewiſe uſed in the Hiſtory of *Kaleb*, beginning at the 13*th. Verſe* of the ſaid *Chapter.* The building of an *Altar* beyond *Iordan*, by the two Tribes and a half mention'd in the 22. *Joſh. v.* 10. In all Probability happen'd after *Joſhuah*'s Death; becauſe in all that ſtory, there is not ſo much as one word ſaid of him; but the People only deliberated to make War, ſent Embaſſadors, received and approved the Anſwer which was returned. *Laſtly*, it appears by the 14*th. Verſe* of the 10*th. Chap.* That the Book of *Joſhua* was written many Ages after his Death, for the Text ſaith, *and there was no day like that before or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the Voice of a Man:* If then *Joſhua* writ any Book, it muſt be that of *Jaſher*, mentioned in the

ſame

ſame ſtory *v.* the 13*th.* As for the Book of *Judges*, I believe no Man in his right Wits will think it written by the *Judges* themſelves, for the end of the Hiſtory in the 2*d. Chap.* clearly ſhews, it was all written by one ſingle Perſon, who tells us in many places, that in thoſe days there was no King in *Iſrael*; which is an argument it was written in a Time when the People had Kings. Concerning the Books of *Samuel* there needs no deliberation, ſeeing the Hiſtory is carried on ſo far beyond his death; but however let this be obſerved, that this Book muſt be written many Ages after him, for the Heſtorian in the 1*ſt.* Book of *Sam. Chap.* 9. *v.* 9. ſaith, in a parentheſis. *Before time in Iſrael, when a Man went to inquire of God, thus he ſpake, come let us go to the Seer, for he that is now called a Prophet, was before time called a Seer.* The two Books of the *Kings*, as appears by the Books themſelves, were collected out of what was written of the Reign of *Solomon*, ſee the 1*ſt.* Book of *Kings chap.* 11. *v.* 5. And out of the Chronicles both of the *Kings* of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, *chap.* 14. *v.* 19, 29. *The reſt of the Acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned; behold they are written in the Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.* We therefore conclude, that all the Books which we have

named, were written long after the Matters of Fact happen'd which they relate: If we conſider the Connexion and Subject of theſe Books, we ſhall quickly find, that they were all written by one and the ſame Hiſtorian, who deſigned to write the Antiquities of the *Jews*, from their firſt Original to the firſt deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; for the Books are by connexion ſo linked together, that they ſeem to be but the ſingle Narration of one Hiſtorian; for as ſoon as he hath done with the Life of *Moſes*, he begins the next Book with theſe words. *Now after the Death of Moſes the Servant of the Lord, it came to paſs that the Lord ſpake unto Joſhuah.* And ending the ſtory of *Joſhuah* with his Death, he doth with the very ſame Tranſition and Conjunction, begin the Book of *Judges* in theſe words. *Now after the Death of Joſhuah, it came to paſs that the Children of Iſrael asked the Lord:* And to this Book of *Judges* as an Appendix, he joyneth the Book of *Ruth* in theſe words. *Now it came to paſs in the days when the Judges ruled, that there was a Famin in the Land.* To which Book of *Ruth*, he doth in the ſame manner joyn the firſt Book of *Samuel*: that ended, with his wonted Tranſition, he goes on to the Second Book, and to this (the Hiſtory of *David* not being fully ended) he joyns the firſt Book of *Kings*: then

then going on with *David*'s Hiſtory, addeth with his uſual Connexion the Second Book. The context and Order of the Hiſtories, likewiſe declare the Hiſtorian to be but one Perſon, who propounded to himſelf one certain end; for he begins with the Original of the *Jewiſh* Nation, then in order ſhews upon what occaſion and at what time *Moſes* preſcribed Laws, and Propheſyed many things to them; afterward he relates how they invaded the Land of Promiſe, according to *Moſes*'s predictions, *Deut. Chap.* 7. And when they had poſſeſt it, how they would forſake God's Laws, *Deut. Chap.* 31. *v.* 16. And what evils ſhould thereupon follow, *verſe* 17. Next he declares how they would chuſe *Kings*, *Deut. Chap.* 17. *v.* 14. Whoſe Affairs ſhould ſucceed well or ill, according to the care they took in obſerving the Laws, *Deut. Chap.* 28. *v.* 36, 68. And *Laſtly* concludes with the ruin of their Government as *Moſes* foretold: Of things which ſerved litle to the Eſtabliſhment of the Law, he ſaid nothing, or elſe refers the Reader to other Authors; ſo that all theſe Books conſpire in this one thing, namely, the publiſhing the Propheſies and Edicts of *Moſes*, and making them good by what after happen'd. The ſimplicity and plainneſs of the Subject of all the Books, the con-

nexion of them, and their being written many Ages after the things done, is argument enough to perſwade any Man, that they were all written by one Hiſtorian; but who he was, I cannot evidently prove, I have ſome Reaſons, and thoſe of ſome weight, to think it was *Eſdras*, ſeeing the Hiſtorian (whom we now know to be one Perſon) carries on the Hiſtory as far as *Jehoiachim*'s deliverance out of Priſon; and moreover adds, that he ſate at the *King*'s Table all his Life, which muſt be either the Table of *King Jehoiachim*, or of the Son of *Nebuchadnezzar* (for the Senſe is very dubious.) It follows that it could not be any one before *Eſdras*, the Scripture ſaith of *Eſdras*, without mentioning any other Perſon, *Ezra. Chap.* 7. *v.* 10. *That he had prepared his Heart to ſeek the Law of the Lord, to do it*; and *Verſe 6th. That he was a ready Scribe in the Law of Moſes.* So that I cannot conjecture any body but *Eſdras* ſhould write thoſe Books: in the Teſtimony given of him, we find that he did not only ſeek the Law of God, but that he likewiſe explain'd it, *Nehem. Chap.* 8. *v.* 8. Where it is ſaid, *that they read in the Book of the Law of God diſtinctly, and gave the Senſe thereof, and cauſed them to underſtand the Reading.* Now becauſe in the Book of *Deutronomy*, not only the Book of the Law of

Moſes

Moſes (at leaſt a great part of it) is contain'd, but alſo many things are inſerted for the better explication thereof; I conjecture, The Book of *Deutronomy* to be that Book of the Law of God, written, ſet forth, and expounded by *Eſdras*, which they then read, and that many things are put in by Way of Parentheſis, more clearly to explain it. We gave you ſeveral Inſtances, when I unfolded *Aben-Ezras* meaning, there are more of the like kind as appears, *Deut. Chap.* 2. *v.* 12. *The Horites alſo dwelt in Seir before time, but the Children of Eſau ſucceeded them, when they had deſtroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their ſtead, as Iſrael did unto the Land of his Poſſeſſion, which the Lord gave unto them.* This explains the 3*d.* and 4*th. Verſes* of the ſame *Chapter* namely, that *Mount Seir*, which was the Inheritance of the Sons of *Eſau*, was not found by them uninhabited; but that they invaded the *Horites*, who firſt dwelt there; and having ſubdued, deſtroyed them, as the Children of *Iſrael* did the *Cananites* after the Death of *Moſes*: likewiſe in the 10*th. Chapter* it is evident, that the 6, 7, 8, and 9. *verſes* are interpoſed by Way of Parentheſis with the Words of *Moſes*; for the 8*th. Verſe* which begins in theſe words, *at that time the Lord ſeparated the Tribe of Levi*——muſt neceſſarily have reference to

the 5*th. Verſe*, which ſpeaks of *Moſes* coming down from the Mount, and putting the Tables into the *Ark*; and not to the death of *Aron* (mentioned in the 6*th. Verſe.*) Of which *Eſdras* ſpake here for no other Reaſon, but becauſe *Moſes* in the ſtory of the *Golden Calf*, which the People worſhipt, ſaid, in the 9*th. Chap. v.* 20. *That he prayed for Aron.* The Hiſtorian goes on and declares, that God at that time, of which *Moſes* ſpeaks, choſe for himſelf the Tribe of *Levi*, that he might ſhew the Cauſe of their Election, and alſo why the *Levites* had no Part or Inheritance with their Brethren: this done in the words of *Moſes*, he follows the thred of the Hiſtory. If we conſider the Preface of the Book, and all the Places which ſpeak of *Moſes* in the Third Perſon, and many other things, which cannot now be known, which he added or expreſt in other words, that they might be the better underſtood by thoſe that lived in his time; without doubt had we the very Book of the Law which *Moſes* wrote, we ſhould find that all the Commandments very much differ not only in words, but in Order, Matter and Senſe. Compare the Decalogue of this Book with that in *Exodus*, where it is expreſly ſet down, we ſhall find this to vary from that; for the *Fourth* Commandment in *Deutronomy*

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is not only commanded in another Form; but is enlarged, and the Reaſon of it likewiſe differs much from that in *Exodus*; ſo that this as in other Places was done by *Eſdras*, becauſe he explained the Law of God to thoſe that lived in his days; and therefore 'tis likely this was the Book of the Law of God, which he ſet forth and expounded, and I likewiſe believe it, the firſt of all thoſe Books he wrote, becauſe it contains the Laws of his Country, which the People extreamly wanted, and alſo becauſe this Book is with no Antecedent Connexion joyned to another, but without any kind of reference begins thus. *Theſe be the Words of Moſes.* And after he finiſhed this Book, and taught the People the Laws, I believe he applyed himſelf to compoſe the whole Hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* Nation, from the Creation of the World to the firſt Deſtruction of the City *Jeruſalem*; inſerting this Book of *Deutronomy* in its proper Place, and perhaps to the firſt five Books gave the Name of *Moſes*, becauſe his Life is the Principal Subject of them; for the ſame reaſon, he called the *Sixth* Book by the Name of *Joſhuah*, the *Seventh Judges*, the *Eighth Ruth*, the *Ninth* and perhaps the *Tenth Samuel*, the *Eleventh* and *Twelfth Kings*, but whether *Eſdras* perfected them, as he deſired with his own Hand, inquire in the next *Chapter*?

CHAP. IX.

Whether Eſdras *perfected the Books, which we ſuppoſe he wrote? and whether the Marginal Notes, which are found in the* Hebrew *Copies be divers readings?*

HOW much the inquiry made in the former Chapter, concerning the Pen-Man of the Books therein mentioned, may conduce to the perfect underſtanding of them; will be eaſily gueſs'd by thoſe Places only, which we have quoted to make good our Opinion in this Point; which places would otherwiſe have ſeemed very obſcure: but beſide the Writer, there are other things obſervable in the Books themſelves, which Common Superſtition will not ſuffer the vulgar to diſcern. The cheifeſt of them is, that *Eſdras* (whom I will ſuppoſe to be the Writer of the foreſaid Books, till ſome body ſhew me another more likely to pen them) did not with his own Hand perfect the

the Relations which the Books contain; but did only collect the Hiſtories out of ſeveral writers, and ſometimes only copying them out, left them to Poſterity neither examin'd nor put into any Order; but what ſhould hinder him from compleatly finiſhing his Work (unleſs it were untimely death) I cannot conjecture: we have indeed no Antient intire *Jewiſh* Hiſtories; but out of a few fragments left us it is evident, that *Eſdras* as I have already ſaid, gather'd his ſtories from ſeveral Writers, and left them very confuſed and imperfect. The Hiſtory of *Ezekiah*, as it is found written from the Relation of *Iſaiah* the Prophet, in the *Second* Book of *Kings chap.* 18. *v.* 17. is recorded in the Chronicles of the *Kings* of *Judah*; and the ſtory in the Chronicles, ſee Book the *2d. Chap.* 32. *v.* 32. We find related almoſt in the ſame words (very few excepted) as it is in the forenamed *Chapter* of the Book of *Kings*: from whence nothing elſe can be concluded, but that there were divers readings of *Iſaiah*'s Relation, unleſs ſome will alſo here dream of Miſteries: Moreover, the laſt *Chapter* of this Book of the *Kings*, is contained in the laſt *Chapter* of the Prophet *Jeremy*, and we find likewiſe the *7th. Chap.* of the *Second* Book of *Samuel*, in the *17th. Chap.* of the *firſt* Book of *Chronicles*; but the words in divers places

places ſo much changed, that it may be eaſily known, the two Chapters were taken out of two different Copies, of the Hiſtory written by the *Prophet Nathan*. *Laſtly*, The Genealogy of the *Kings* of *Edom*, which we have, *Gen. Chap.* 36. from *v.* 31*th.* Is ſet down in the ſame words, in the 1*ſt. Chap.* of the 1*ſt. Book* of *Chron. Beginning* at the 43*th. Verſe*: Now tho' it be evident, that the Author of the *Book* of *Chronicles*, took the things which he related out of other Hiſtorians; yet he had them not out of the Twelve Books, which we believe were written by *Eſdras*; and without doubt had we the Original Hiſtories it would ſo appear: but becauſe we have them not, let us examin the Hiſtories as they now are, obſerving their Order and Connexion, their various Repetitions, and their diſagreement in Calculation of Time, that we may judge of other things. Conſider firſt, the Hiſtory of *Judah* and *Thamar*, *Gen. Chap.* 38. The Hiſtorian begins his Narration in theſe words. *And it came to paſs at that time, that Judah went down from his Brethren*: Which time, muſt neceſſarily have reference to ſome other time, of which he had immediately ſpoken before; but to that time ſpoken of in the preceding *Chapter* of *Geneſis*, it could have no Relation; for from the time that *Joſeph* was carried into *Egypt*, until

until *Jacob* the *Patriarch* went down thither with all his Family, there paſſed but twenty two Years; for *Joſeph*, when he was Sold by his *Brethren*, was but Seventeen Years Old, and when he was ſent for out of Priſon by *Pharaoh* but Thirty, to which, if the Seven Years of Plenty, and Two of Famin be added, they make up in all no more than Two and Twenty; in which ſpace of time, no Man can conceive ſo many things ſhould happen; namely, that *Judah* ſhould ſucceſſively have three Sons, of which the Eldeſt ſhould at a fit Age marry *Thamar*, and he dying the Second Brother ſhould take her to Wife, who alſo dyed, and that ſometime after this happen'd, *Judah* himſelf ſhould ignorantly lye with his own Daughter in-Law *Thamar*, and have two Children by her at one *Birth*; whereof one likewiſe, ſhould within the aforeſaid time of two and twenty Years become a Father. Seeing then all theſe things cannot be referr'd to the time ſpoken of in *Geneſis*, but muſt neceſſarily relate to ſome other time ſpoken of in ſome other *Book*, *Eſdras* muſt therefore only Copy out this Story, and unexamin'd add it to others: but not only this Chapter, but likewiſe the whole Story of *Joſeph* and *Jacob*, muſt neceſſarily be taken out of ſeveral Hiſtorians, ſo little congruity is there

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in it, for the 48*th Chap.* of *Gen.* tells us that when *Joſeph* brought his Father *Jacob* to *Pharaoh*, *Jacob* was an hundred and thirty Years Old, from which deduct twenty two which he paſſed in Mourning for the loſs of *Joſeph*, and ſeventeen which was *Joſeph*'s Age when he was Sold, with ſeven which he ſerved for *Rachel*; it will appear that he was fourſcour and four Years Old when he Marryed *Leah*, and that on the other ſide, *Dinah* was ſcarce ſeven Years Old when ſhe was Raviſht by *Sechem*; and *Simeon* and *Levi* not fully eleven and twelve Years of Age, when they Aſſaulted the City of *Sechem* and put all the People of it to the Sword. There is no need of particularizing all things of this kind in the *Pentateuk*, if this only be conſider'd, that in the five Books all the Precepts and Hiſtorical Relations are promiſcuouſly ſet down, without any order, without any regard had to time, and that one and the ſame Hiſtory is often, and ſometimes diverſly repeated; it muſt be granted that all theſe things were confuſedly gathered and laid together, that they might afterwards be examin'd and put into order, and not only thoſe things which we find in the firſt five Books, but the reſt of the Hiſtories contain'd in the other ſeven, were alſo Collected in the ſame manner.

Who

Who doth not plainly ſee that in the 2*d* *Chapter* of *Judges* from the ſixth *Verſe*, a new Hiſtorian brought in, who had Written the Acts of *Joſhua* and his very Words uſed? For after our Hiſtorian in the laſt *Chapter* of *Joſhua*, had ſpoken of his Death and Burial, and promis'd in the beginning of the Book of *Judges*, to declare what happen'd after *Joſhua*'s Death; if he intended regularly to proſecute his own Hiſtory, why doth he again in the 2*d* *Chapter* of *Judges* tell us what *Joſhua* did, and ſpeak again of his Death and Burial as he had before, the 17 and 18 *chap.* of the 1*ſt* Book of *Sam.* are in all probability taken out of another Hiſtorian, who made the cauſe of *David*'s frequenting *Saul*'s Court, to be quite different from that ſpoken of in the 16. *chap.* of the ſame Book, for he did not underſtand that *David* by the Advice of *Saul*'s Servants, was called to Court, as is declared in the ſaid 16*th* *chap.* but that his Father ſending him to viſit his Brethren in *Saul*'s Camp, *David* by his Victory over *Goliah* became known to *Saul*, and afterward lived in his Court. I ſuſpect the ſame thing of the 26*th* *chap.* of the 1*ſt* Book of *Sam.* and that the Hiſtory of that *Chapter* and what is related in the 24*th* *chap.* are one and the ſame; but taken out of ſeveral Writers: but of this enough,

I come now to examine the Computation of time. It is ſaid in the *6th chap.* of the *1ſt* Book of *Kings*, that *Solomon* four hundred and fourſcore Years after the Children of *Iſrael* came out of the Land of *Egypt*, and in the fourth Year of his own Reign, began to Build the Houſe of the Lord, but from the Hiſtories themſelves we can make it appear it was a much longer time till the Temple was Built.

	Years
For firſt *Moſes* govern'd the People in the deſert.	40
Joſhua who lived a hundred and twenty by the Opinion of	
Joſephus and others govern'd not above.	26
Kuſan Riſgataim kept the People in Bondage.	08
Othonyel the Son of *Kenaz* Judged.	40
Eglon the King of *Moab* kept the People in Bondage.	18
Ehud and *Samger* Judged.	80
Jachin King of *Canaan* kept the People under.	20
The People afterward had reſt.	40
Were again in Subjection to *Midian.*	07
Were again at Liberty under *Gideon.*	40
Were under the Power of *Abimelech.*	03
Tola the Son of *Puah* Judged.	23

Jair

Jair Judged. 22
The People were again in Bondage to the *Philiſtines* and *Ammonites*. 18
Jephtah Judged. 06
Abſan the *Bethlemite* Judged. 07
Elon the *Zebulonite*. 10
Abdon the *Pirathonite*. 08
The People again in Bondage to the *Philiſtins*. 40
Samſon Judged. 20
Ely Judged. 40
The People in Bondage again to the *Philiſtines* till delivered by *Samuel*. 20
David Reigned. 40
Solomon before he began to Build Reigned. 04
All theſe Years added together make up the Number of 580.

To which number are to be added, the Years of that Age wherein the Commonwealth of the *Jews* flouriſhed after the Death of *Joſhua*, until it was ſubdued by *Kuſan Riſgataim*; which I believe were many; for I cannot be perſwaded, that all the People who had ſeen the wonders of *Joſhua*'s time, ſhould preſently after his Death periſh altogether; neither that they who ſucceeded them, ſhould at once bid farewel to all their Laws, and from a great deal of Vertue, fall in an inſtant into the depth

depth of Wickedneſs and Folly: neither that *Kuſan Riſgataim* Conquer'd them at a blow; but ſeeing all theſe things require almoſt an Age to bring them to paſs, it is not to be doubted but the Scripture in the *2d. 7th. 9th.* and *10th Chapters* of the Book of *Judges*, doth comprize the Hiſtories of many Years which it hath paſſed over in ſilence. We are moreover to add the Years which *Samuel* Judged, whoſe number we find not in Scripture, and the Years alſo of *Saul's* Reign, which are left out in the former Computation, becauſe by his Hiſtory 'tis not evident how many he Reigned, indeed it is ſaid in the *1ſt. Verſe* of the *13th Chap.* of the *1ſt* Book of *Sam.* that *Saul* Reigned two Years, but that Text is maimed, and we may from the Hiſtory it ſelf conclude his Reign was longer; that the Text is defective, no Man who hath but the leaſt Knowledge of the *Hebrew Tongue* can doubt, for it begins thus in the *Latin* Tranſlation. *Annum natus erat* Saul *cum regnavit & duos annos regnavit ſupra* Iſraelem. Which in our *Engliſh Bible* is thus render'd. Saul *Reigned one Year, and when he had Reigned two Years*, &c. but who ſees not, that the number of Years of *Saul's* Age when he began to Reign was omitted, and that the time of his Reign was more then two Years, any Man

Man may gather from the Hiſtory it ſelf; for in the 27*th Chap.* of the ſame Book, *Verſe* the 7*th.* it is ſaid that the time *David* dwelt in the Country of the *Philiſtines*, was a full Year and four Months; ſo that by this Calculation all things elſe which paſſed in *Sauls* Reign, muſt happen in the ſpace of eight Months, which no Man can believe: *Joſephus* in the end of his 6*th* Book of Antiquities, hath thus corrected the Text. *Saul* while *Samuel* lived Reigned eighteen Years, and after *Samuels* Death two, but the Story in the 13*th chap.* doth in no wiſe agree with what went before, for towards the end of the 7*th chap.* *v.* 13. we are told, that the *Philiſtines* were ſo ſubdued by the *Iſraelites*, *that they came no more into the Coaſts of* Iſrael *and the Hand of the Lord was againſt the* Philiſtines *all the days of Samuel*; and yet in the foreſaid 13*th* Chapter 'tis ſaid, that in *Samuels* Life time, the *Philiſtins* invaded the *Iſraelites* and reduced them to ſo great Miſery and Poverty, that they wanted not only Arms to defend themſelves, but alſo Smiths to make ſo much as a Sword or a Spear, that Man muſt take pains enough, who made it his buſineſs ſo to reconcile all the Hiſtories of the firſt Book of *Samuel*, that they ſhould not appear to be Written and put in order by one Hiſtorian: but I

return to what I propoſed, the Years of *Sauls* Reign ought to be added to the foregoing Computation; now how many were the Years of the *Iſraelites Anarchy*, the Scripture doth not mention; my meaning is, that the ſpace of time is not certain, wherein thoſe things happened, which are related from the 17*th* Chapter of *Judges* to the end of that Book; ſo that no exact calculation can be made from the Hiſtories themſelves; neither do they agree in any, but differ very much; ſo that it muſt be granted they were collected from divers Writers, and were never examin'd or put into any order. There is no leſs diſagreement in computation of time, between the Book of *Chronicles* of the *Kings* of *Judah*, and the Book of *Chronicles* of the *Kings* of *Iſrael*, for in the 2*d* Book of *Kings chap.* 1*ſt v.* 17. it is ſaid, *Jehoram* the Son of *Ahab King* of *Iſrael*, began to Reign in the Second Year of the Reign of *Jehoram* the Son of *Jehoſaphat* King of *Judah*, but in the *Chronicles* of the *Kings* of *Judah*, ſee the 2*d* Book of *Kings chap.* 8. *v.* 16. it is ſaid that *Jehoram* the Son of *Jehoſaphat* King of *Judah*, began to Reign in the fifth Year of *Jehoram* the Son of *Ahab* King of *Iſrael*: he that will compare the Hiſtories of the Books of *Chronicles*, with thoſe in the Book of *Kings*, ſhall find many of the like differences,

ferences, which I will not here particularly mention, nor trouble you with the ſhifts ſome Authors have uſed to reconcile them; the *Rabbines* perfectly doat, and ſome Commentators that I have read, impoſing upon us their own dreams and inventions, plainly corrupt the very Language it ſelf (for example) in the 2*d* Book of the *Chronicles c.* 22. *v.* 2. it is ſaid *Ahaziah* was Forty and two Years Old when he began to Reign. Some would have theſe Years to commence not from *Ahaziah's* Nativity, but from the Reign of *Omri*, if they can prove this to be the meaning of the Author of the Book of *Chronicles*, I may in plain Terms ſay of him, that he knew not how to ſpeak Senſe. Commentators are full of the like conceits, wherein were there any Truth, a Man might poſitively aver, that the Ancient *Hebrews* did not underſtand their own Language, but were ignorant of all order in Hiſtory, and that there is no rule or any reaſon to be obſerved in expounding Scripture; but every Man may phancy and forge what he pleaſes. If any think I ſpeak too generally and without ground, I intreat that Man to ſhew me any ſuch certain order in theſe Hiſtories, as *Chronologers* may without any groſs miſtakes follow, and that while he is endeavoring to explain and reconcile the Hiſtories, he will ſo ſtrictly obſerve the

Pharſes and Manners of ſpeaking, the diſpoſing and contexture of the Narrations, that another according to his explications, may in Writing imitate them, which if he can do, I will throw away my Pen and take him for an *Oracle*. I have been endeavoring but could never do any thing like it, I have Written nothing which I did not often and long meditate, and tho' from my Childhood, I have been Seaſoned with the common and general opinions concerning Scripture, yet I could not poſſibly avoid confeſſing the thing I have mentioned, but I will no longer detain the Reader concerning this particular, nor will I further provoke him to undertake, that which I think is not feaſible; I only made the propoſal the better to explain my own meaning, and I now proceed to conſider thoſe things which concern the Fate or Fortune of the Books; for we are to obſerve, that they have not been ſo carefully kept by poſterity, as that no faults have crept into them: the Ancient *Scribes* have taken notice of many dubious readings, and many maimed Texts, and yet not of all; but whether the faults which have crept into thoſe Books, be of ſo great importance as to give the Reader much trouble, I will not diſpute; I believe they are not conſiderable to thoſe that Read the Scripture with any Freedom of judgment,

ment, and I can poſitively affirm, that *I* never obſerved any Error or variety of Readings concerning mere precepts or inſtructions, which could render them doubtful or obſcure; but many will not allow of any faults at all in any thing throughout the whole Scripture, but peremptorily maintain, that God by a ſingular and ſpecial Providence, hath kept the *Bible* free from all corruptions or adulteration, and that the various Readings of it, comprehend profound miſteries, and will have great Secrets lye hid, even in *Aſteriſms*, Spaces, Points and Accents: but whether this opinion proceed from folly, and the dotage of Devotion, or from their arrogance and malice, allowing none but themſelves to know Gods Secrets I cannot tell; of this I am ſure, I never read any thing which came from ſuch Men, that ſeem'd myſterious, but rather ſavor'd of Schoool-boy conceits. I have met with ſome trifling *Cabbaliſts*, whoſe Freaks and Folly a Man cannot chuſe but admire. That faults have crept into the Scripture, no ingenuous Perſon can deny, who reads that Text I have already mention'd concerning *Saul*, in the *13th chap. v. 1ſt.* of the *1ſt* Book of *Samuel*, and alſo that in the *2d verſe* of the *6th chap.* of the *2d* Book of *Sam.* where it is ſaid that *David aroſe and*

went with all the People that were with him from Judah, *to bring from thence the Ark of God.* Who doth not ſee that the name of the place to which they went to fetch the Ark is leſt out, *viz. Kiriathjearim* nor can any Man deny but that the Text in the 37*th verſe* of the 13*th chap.* of the 2*d* Book of *Sam.* is defective. *But Abſolon fled and went to Talmai the Son of Ammihud and mourn'd for his Son every day.* It ſhould have been, and *David* mourned for his Son every day, and therefore in our *Engliſh* Tranſlation the Word *David* is put in, but is not in the *Latin.* There are other ſuch faults which do not at preſent occur to my memory. That the marginal Notes found every where in the *Hebrew* Copies were dubious readings, no Man will doubt, who conſiders that many of them proceeded from the great likneſs, which ſome of the *Hebrew* Letters have one to another, namely, from the ſimilitude which is between the Letter *Kaf* and *Bet*, the Letter *Jod* and *Van*, the Letter *Dalet* and *Res* (for example) in the 2*d* Book of *Sam. chap.* 5. *v.* 24. it is ſaid in the *Latin* Tranſlation, *in eo tempore quo audies*, the margent hath it *Cum audies*, and *Judges chap.* 21. *v.* 22. the *Latin* Text is, *& quando earum patres vel fratres in multitudine (hoc eſt ſæpe) ad nos venerint*, into the margent is put *ad litigandum*: many different readings likewiſe come from the

the uſe of thoſe Letters, whoſe ſound or pronunciation is in reading ſcarcely perceived, and one is ſometimes taken for another (for example) *Levit. chap.* 25. *v.* 29. it is Written in the Text, that if a Houſe were ſold which was in a City that had a Wall, the margent ſays that had not a Wall. But tho' theſe things are evident yet we will make anſwer to ſome arguments of the *Phariſes*, who endeavor to perſwade the World, that marginal Notes were by thoſe that Copied out the Books of Scripture, purpoſely placed there to ſignify ſome great myſtery : they ground their firſt argument which I think very ſlight, upon the common uſe of reading the Scripture, for ſay they, if theſe marginal Notes were uſed purpoſely to ſhew various readings, and ſuch as could not be decided ; why then hath cuſtom prevailed, ſtill to retain the marginal Senſe as always the beſt, and that it was fit the moſt genuine and approved Senſe, ſhould be expreſt in the Text rather then in the margent. Their Second Argument which carries ſome countenance is this, errors and miſtakes in Books ſay they, are not purpoſely put in, but happen by chance, now how comes it to paſs that in all the firſt five Books, the *Hebrew* Word נער *Nagnad* which ſignifies in *Latin Puella* and in *Engliſh* a

Girl or Young Maid, ſhould contrary to the Rules of *Grammar* be Written in all places but one as a defective Word, without the Letter *He*, and yet in the margent be Written always right, did this happen by miſtake, and was the Writer always ſo much in haſte, that when he came to this word he conſtantly left out that Letter? this defect might without any ſcruple have been eaſily mended and ſupplyed: if then theſe various Readings did not happen by chance, and yet thoſe evident Errors were left uncorrected, the firſt Writers muſt deſignedly do it, thereby to ſignify ſomewhat. But theſe Arguments are eaſily anſwer'd, that which is urged concerning Uſe and Cuſtom, is not much to be minded. I know not how far Superſtition might prevail, but ſometimes both Readings or Senſes might ſeem equally good and tollerable, and therefore that neither might be neglected or undervalued, they would have one written, and the other read; they were afraid in a Matter of ſuch conſequence, to paſs any poſitive Determination, leaſt they might through uncertainty miſtake, and take the wrong Reading for the true; and therefore reſolved not to prefer one before the other, which they muſt have done, if they had commanded that one only ſhould be written and read: the

Reaſon

Reaſon why the Marginal Notes are not written in the Text, is becauſe ſome things, tho' they be rightly written, yet they would have them read as they were noted in the Margent; and therefore they appointed the Bible to be generally read according to the Marginal Notes. Old *Obſolete* words out of uſe, which the good Manners of the preſent time would not permit to be publickly read, cauſed the Scribes to put things into the Margent, which they would have publickly read, Marginal Notes not being always dubious Readings, but contain'd ſometimes Words and Expreſſions not in Uſe: the Antient Scribes being Men free from evil Meaning, expreſt things in plain downright words without Courtly Epithites; but after Naughtineſs and Luxury began to Reign, thoſe words which the Antients thought had no immodeſty in them, began to be accounted Obſcene; yet there was no neceſſity upon this account to change the Text and Scripture it ſelf, but for Decency's ſake, they ordained that thoſe words, which ſignify'd Coition and the Excrements, ſhould be publickly read to the People with greater Modeſty, as they were noted in the Margent. *Laſtly*, whatever the reaſon be, why they read and interpreted the Text according to the Marginal Notes, yet it is not becauſe thoſe

Marginal

Marginal readings are always the trueſt interpretation; for the *Rabbines* do not only differ in the *Talmud* from the *Maſorites*, and have other Readings which they approve; but ſome Notes are found in the Margent, which the common Uſe of the Language will not allow (for example) in the 2*d*. Book of *Sam. Chap.* 14. *v.* 22. The Text ſaith, *in that the King hath fulfilled the requeſt of his Servant.* Which the Latin Tranſlation renders, *quia effecit Rex ſecundum Sententiam ſervi ſui*, which conſtruction is very regular, and agrees with that in the 16*th Verſe* of the ſame *Chapter*; but the reading in the Margent, which is *ſervi tui* of thy ſervant, doth not agree with the Perſon of the Verb. So alſo in the laſt *Verſe* of the 16*th Chapter* of that Book, the written Text in the Latin Tranſlation is, *ut cum conſultat* (*id eſt conſultatur*) *verbum Dei.* But in the Margent is added the Pronoun *quis*, for the Nomnative caſe to the Verb, which was not learnedly done; for the common Cuſtom of that Language was to uſe Verbs Impersonals, for the Third Perſon ſingular of Verbs Active, as is well known to Grammarians. In like manner we meet with many Marginal Notes, which ought to be preferr'd before the written reading of the Text. Now for the *Phariſees* Second Argument, it is eaſily anſwer'd

by

by what hath been ſaid, namely, that the Scribes, beſide dubious Readings, noted obſolete words; for without doubt as in other Languages, ſo in the *Hebrew*, later times antiquated and made uſeleſs many words, which were found in the Bible by later Writers, who as we have ſaid, noted them in the Margent, that they might be read before the People in the Senſe and Signification that was then in uſe: for this Reaſon the word *Naghar* is every where found noted in the Margent, becauſe antiently it was of the common Gender, and ſignifyed the ſame that did the word *Juvenis* amongſt the Latins, ſo alſo the *Metropolis* of the *Jews* was wont to be called *Jeruſalem*, and not *Jeruſalaim*. I think the ſame of the Pronoun *ipſe* and *ipſa*, he and ſhe, becauſe the later Writers have changed *Vau* into *Jod* (which change in the *Hebrew* Tongue is frequent) when they would ſignify the Feminine Gender; but the antients never uſed to diſtinguiſh the Feminine from the Maſculine Gender of this Pronoun but only by the *Vowels*. Moreover, the Anomaly or Irregularity of Verbs in former and later times was not the ſame; and *Laſtly*, The Antients made uſe of Paragogical (that is) additional Letters, as an Elegancy particular to their times; all which I can prove by many examples, with which

I will not at this time trouble the Reader, If any Man ask how I came to the Knowledge of theſe things, I anſwer, becauſe I have found them in very Antient Copies of the Bible, tho' later Writers would not follow thoſe Copies, which is the only cauſe that in other Languages almoſt loſt, Obſolete words are ſtill underſtood: but perhaps ſome will ſtill object, and ſince I have declared, that the greateſt Part of thoſe Notes are not doubtful readings, will ask me firſt why of one Place, there are never found more then two readings; why not ſometimes three or more? *Secondly*, ſeeing there are ſomethings in the written Text, ſo manifeſtly repugnant to the Rules ofGrammar, which yet are rightly noted in the margent, it may be asked, how it is poſſible to believe that the Writers could make any doubt, which was the true Reading? To this I anſwer, *Firſt*, that there were more Readings then we find noted in our Copies; for in the *Talmud* there are many noted, which are neglected by the *Maſorites*, and in many places ſo much miſliked by them; that the Superſtitious Corrector of the *Bombergian* Bibles, was forced to confeſs in his Preface, that he knew not how to reconcile them: he ſaith, here we know not what to anſwer more then we did, namely, that it was the Cuſtom of the *Talmudiſts*

diſts to contradict the *Maſorites*, and therefore we have not ſufficient Ground to conclude, that of one Place there were never more then two readings, yet I eaſily grant, yea I believe, that there are not now to be found more then two Readings of one place and that for two Reaſons. *Firſt*, becauſe that, from whence the variety of Readings proceeded, could not occaſion more then two; for we have ſhew'd, that the difference of Readings, aroſe from the Similitude, which was between ſome Letters, and ſtill the doubt was no more but this, which of two Letters was to be written? whether *Bet* or *Kaf*, *Jod* or *Vau*, *Dalet* or *Res*. Of which there was frequent uſe; and therefore it often happen'd, that the Senſe was tollerable with either: beſide it was doubtful ſometimes, whether a Syllable was long or ſhort, whoſe quantity was to be determin'd by thoſe Letters whoſe pronunciation was ſcarcely to be perceived: and *Laſtly*, all marginal Notes were not dubious Readings, for as we have already ſaid, many of them were put in for decency and modeſty's ſake; and ſometimes to explain Obſolete and Antiquated words. The *Second* Reaſon why I perſwade my ſelf that more then two Readings cannot be found of one Place, is, becauſe I believe the Antient Scribes met with very few Originals;

Originals; perhaps not above two or three; In the Treatiſe of the Scribes, *chap. 6th.* There is mention made but of three, which they pretend were found in the Time of *Eſdras*, and boaſt that the Notes were put in by him; however it were, tho' they had three Original Copies, we may with reaſon imagine, that two of them might ſtill agree in the ſame Place together: but every body may juſtly wonder, that only in three copies there ſhould be found three divers Readings of one Place. How it came to paſs, that after *Eſdras* there ſhould be ſo great a ſcarcity of copies, can be no great wonder to any Man, who will but read the firſt *chapter* of the firſt Book of *Machabees*; or the Seventh *Chapter* of the Twelveth Book of *Joſephus*'s Antiquities: yea 'tis a Miracle, that after ſo great and continual a Perſecution, they ſhould be able, if we conſider the ſtory, to keep thoſe few they had. We ſee then the Reaſons why we no where meet with more then two dubious Readings, ſo that it can be no argument at all to conclude, that becauſe there are no where more then two, therefore the Bible in thoſe noted places was not written right, purpoſely to ſignify ſome Miſtery. The Second Objection which ſaith, ſome things are ſo manifeſtly falſe written,

written, that no body can deny it, and therefore thoſe Errors ought to have been corrected rather in the Text, then noted in the margent is of no great weight; nor am I obliged to know, what was the Reaſon they did not do it: perhaps it was beeauſe they were ſo honeſt, as to leave the Bible to poſterity juſt as they found it, in the few Originals they met with; and thought fit to note the diſagreement between the Original Copies, rather as divers, then dubious Readings; nor have I called them dubious, upon any other account, but becauſe I cannot tell which of the two ought to be preferr'd. *Laſtly*, The Scribes beſide theſe dubious readings, (by leaving a void ſpace in the middle of Paragraphs) have noted many defective places, the preciſe number of which ſpaces, the *Maſorites* have obſerved to be twenty eight, I know not whether they believe there is likewiſe ſome miſtery in that number, the *Phariſees* are very religious obſervers of this ſpace; there is an Example of one of them *Gen. Chap.* 4. *v.* 8. In the Latin Tranſlation, 'tis thus written, *& dixit Cain Habeli Fratri ſuo,——& contigit dum erant in Campo ut Cain.* So that where we expected to hear what it was *Cain* ſaid

ſaid to his Brother, there is only a void Space, of which ſpaces the Scribes have left Twenty eight, in many of which nothing would ſeem to be wanting, if there had not been ſuch a void ſpace left.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The reſt of the Books of the Old Teſtament *in like manner examined.*

OF the two Books of *Chronicles*, there is not much to be ſaid worth a man's knowing, nor any thing that is certain; more than that they were written long after *Eſdras*; and perhaps, after *Judas Maccabeus* rebuilt the Temple: for in the *9th. chap.* of the firſt Book of *Chron.* the Hiſtorian tells us, what Families (in the time of *Eſdras*) firſt inhabited *Jeruſalem*, and in the *17th.* verſe of that Chapter ſpeaks of the Porters, whereof two are likewiſe named in the *19th* verſe of the *11th* chapter of *Nehemiah*, which is a plain proof, that theſe Books were written after the City was rebuilt. Concerning the Writer, the Authority, Doctrine, and uſefulneſs of the Books, I can ſay nothing; but I very much wonder they ſhould be eſteem'd Sacred and Canonical, by thoſe men who think the Book of *Wiſdom*, *Tobit*, and others Apocriphal: It is not my purpoſe to magnify their Authority, ſeeing they are generally receiv'd for Canonical; as they are I leave them. The *Pſalms* were

collected and divided into five Books, in the time of the *Second Temple*; for the 88*th Pſalm* was by the teſtimony of *Philo Judæus*, publiſhed when King *Jehoiachim* was kept a Priſoner at *Babylon*; and the 89*th Pſalm*, when he was ſet at liberty. I believe *Philo* would not have ſaid it, had it not been the received Opinion of his time; or had he not heard it from very credible perſons. I believe the *Proverbs of Solomon* were collected much about the ſame time, or at leaſt, in the days of King *Joſiah*; becauſe it is ſaid, *Prov. chap.* 25. *v.* 1. *Theſe are the Pooverbs of* Solomon *which the men of* Hezekiah *King of* Judah *copied out.* But I cannot here forbear to take notice of the great boldneſs of the *Rabbins*, who would have excluded this Book and that of *Eccleſiaſtes*, out of the Sacred Canon, which had been certainly done, had they not met with ſome places which commend *Moſes* Law; 'tis pity ſuch things, ſo ſacred and excellent, ſhould lie at the mercy of ſuch men; we thank them for communicating them to us, but 'tis a great doubt whether they have been faithfully deliver'd to poſterity, which I will not here ſtrictly examin, but proceed to the Books of the *Prophets*: Having ſeriouſly conſider'd them, I plainly perceive, That the Propheſies contain'd in them, were collected out of other Books; they are not ſet down in the order

order wherein they were deliver'd, nor written by the Prophets themſelves; neither are all recorded, but ſuch as here and there could be found out: ſo that theſe Books are but meer fragments of the Prophets. *Iſaiah* began to propheſy in the time of *Uzziah* King of *Judah* as the Writer of the Book of *Iſaiah* himſelf teſtifies in the 1*ſt. chap.* and 1*ſt. verſe*; and *Iſaiah* did not Propheſy only in that King's Reign, but alſo wrote a Hiſtory of all that King did; as appears in the 2*d* Book of *Chron. chap.* 26. *v.* 22. *The reſt of the Acts of* Uzziah *firſt and laſt, did* Iſaiah *the Prophet the Son of* Amos *write*; which Book 'tis pity we have not, thoſe things which we have, as hath been already ſaid, were copied out of the *Chronicles* of the Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*: The *Rabbins* likewiſe declare, That *Iſaiah* alſo propheſy'd in the time of *Manaſſeh*, by whom he was put to death; and tho' in that they ſeem fabulous, yet they did not believe all his Propheſies were extant. The Propheſies of *Jeremy* which are Hiſtorically related, were pick'd up, and collected out of divers *Chronologers*; for they are not only confuſedly put together, without any regard had to time; but the ſame Hiſtory is alſo repeated in divers manners; for the 21*th chap.* contains the Propheſy, wherein *Jeremy* foretold King *Zedekiah*, who ſent to

conſult him, That the City of *Jeruſalem* ſhould be deſtroy'd; and for which Propheſy he was apprehended. Then after an abrupt breaking off from this Hiſtory; the 22*th chap.* ſets forth *Jeremy*'s Declamation and Propheſy againſt King *Jehoiachim*, who reigned before *Zedekiah*, declaring *Jehoiachim's* Captivity. After this, the 25*th chap.* declares thoſe things which were before reveal'd to the Prophet, in the fourth year of King *Jehoiachim*, and without obſerving any order of time, goes on to heap together many Propheſies, till at length the 38*th* chapter (as if the fifteen intermediate chapters had been but a Parentheſis) returns again to that ſpoken of in the 21*th chap.* for the conjunction *Then*, wherewith the 38*th* chapter begins, relates to the 8, 9, and 10 *verſes* of the 21*th chap.* and the relation given in this 38*th chap.* of *Jeremy's* laſt apprehenſion, and being long kept in a Dungeon, is very different from that we have of it in the 37*th chap.* So that it clearly appears, all theſe things were taken out of divers Hiſtorians, and no other excuſe can be made for them. The reſt of *Jeremy's* Propheſies contain'd in other Chapters, where he ſpeaks in his own perſon, ſeem to be copied out of the Book which *Baruch* writ from *Jeremy's* own Mouth; which Book (as appears by the 2*d. verſe* of the 36*th chap.*

contain'd

contain'd only thoſe things which were reveal'd to the Prophet, from the time of *Joſiah* unto the fourth year of *Jehoiachim*, from which year the Book begins; out of which Book alſo all thoſe things ſeem to be copy'd, which are related from the 2*d verſe* of the 45*th chap.* to the 49*th verſe* of the 51*th chap.* That the Book of *Ezekiel* is likewiſe but a fragment, is manifeſt by the firſt verſes thereof; for who doth not take notice, that the Conjunction *Now* wherewith the Book begins, relates to ſomewhat that had been already ſaid, and joins that, to what he had further to ſay; not only the Conjunction, but the whole Contexture of what he ſpoke, implies and ſuppoſeth other things which had been before written; for the Writer himſelf ſaith by way of Parentheſis, in the 3*d verſe* of the 1*ſt. chap. The word of the Lord came often to* Ezekiel *the Prieſt, the Son of* Buzi *in the land of the* Chaldeans: as if he ſhould ſay, That the words of *Ezekiel* which hitherto he had copied out, related to other things which were revealed to him before the preſent thirtieth year. *Joſephus* in his 10*th* Book of *Antiquities*, *chap.* 9. declares, *Ezekiel* propheſy'd that *Zedechiah* would not ſee *Babylon*, which Propheſy doth not appear in the Book we have of *Ezekiel*; but the 17*th. chap.* foretels the contrary, that he was to

be carry'd Captive thither. Whether *Hoſeah* wrote any thing more than is in the Book which bears his name, I am not certain; but I much wonder that we ſhould have nothing more of his; ſeeing by the perſons teſtimony who wrote the Book called *Hoſea*, that Prophet Propheſy'd no leſs than eighty four years, as appears by the *1ſt verſe* of the *1ſt chap.* where the ſeveral Kings are named, in whoſe times he lived: in general, we know that the writers of the Books which we call the *Prophets*, did neither collect the Propheſies of all that were Prophets, nor all the Propheſies of thoſe Prophets whoſe names we have; for we have not any of the Propheſies of thoſe Prophets who propheſy'd in the time of *Manaſſeh*, (of which Prophets mention is made, tho' not by name, in the *2d* Book of *Chron. chap.* 33. *v.* 10, 18, 19.) nor have we all the Propheſies of the twelve Prophets: We have none of *Jonah's* Propheſies, but thoſe that concerned the *Ninevites*, tho' he alſo propheſy'd to *Iſrael*, as appears by the *25th. verſe* of the *14th chap.* of the *2d.* Book of *Kings.*

Of the Book of *Job*, and of *Job* himſelf, there hath been among Writers much diſpute; ſome think *Moſes* wrote the Book of *Job*, and that the whole ſtory is nothing but a Parable, which is likewiſe a Tradition

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of the *Rabbins* in their *Talmud*, and favour'd by *Maimonides* in his Book ſtill'd *More Nebuchim*: Others believe the Hiſtory to be real and true, and that *Job* lived in the time of *Jacob*, and married his Daughter *Dinah*; but *Aben Ezra*, as I have already ſaid, in his Commentaries on the Book of *Job* ſaith, It was tranſlated out of ſome other Language into the Hebrew; which I could wiſh he had more clearly prov'd; for then we might conclude, the *Gentiles* alſo had Books which were Sacred. I leave the thing ſtill doubtful, and conjecture that *Job* was ſome *Gentile* of great conſtancy of Mind, who at firſt was very proſperous, afterward very unfortunate, and in the end very happy: for in *Ezechiel*, *chap.* 14 *v.* 14. he is named with *Noah* and *Daniel* for a righteous man. The various Fortune, and conſtant Mind of *Job*, gave many an occaſion of diſputing God's Providence, and to the Author of the Book, of compoſing a Dialogue, whereof the Subject and Stile ſeem to be a Man's rather at eaſe, meditating in his Study, than ſick on a Dunghill; and I might with *Aben Ezra* believe, the Book to be tranſlated out of another Language, becauſe it ſeems to affect the Heathen Poeſy; the Father of the Gods being in the firſt Chapter brought in twice, calling a Council,

and *Momus*, who is called *Satan*, anſwering God with great liberty; but theſe are meer frivolous conjectures. The Book of *Daniel* without doubt from the 8*th* Chapter thereof, contains the Writings of *Daniel*; but from whence the firſt ſeven Chapters were copy'd, I know not; we may ſuſpect, that ſeeing all of them, but the firſt, were written in the *Chaldee* Language, they were taken out of that Nation's Chronologies, of which could we be certain, it were a clear proof, that the Scripture is to be accounted Sacred, only in reſpect of the things contain'd in it, and not in reſpect of the Language, Words, or Stile wherein they are expreſs'd; and that all Books which declare and teach what is excellently good, in what Tongue, or by what Nation ſoever written, are equally Sacred: Let this, at leaſt, be obſerv'd, that the Chapters which are written in *Chaldee*, are no leſs Sacred than any of the reſt in the whole Bible. To this Book of *Daniel*, the firſt Book of *Ezra* is ſo annex'd, that it appears they were both written by one perſon, who relates what ſucceſſively paſt amongſt the *Jews*, from the firſt Captivity: And to this Book of *Eſdras*, without doubt is joyn'd the Book of *Heſter*, for the Conjunction wherewith the Book begins, can relate to no other Book, nor can it be thought the ſame Book which

Mordecai

Mordecai wrote; for he that writ the Book of *Heſter*, ſaith in the 9*th chap. v.* 20. that *Mordecai* wrote Letters, and declares what were their Contents: Moreover, the 31*th* of the ſame Chapter tells us, That Queen *Heſter* confirm'd by a Decree, all things concerning the Feaſt of *Purim*, or *Lots*; and in the 32*th. verſe* 'tis ſaid, *it was written in the Book*; that is, according to the *Hebrew* manner of ſpeaking, in a Book which every one at that time knew; which Book, with others, *Aben Ezra* ſays, was loſt; what elſe concerned *Mordecai*, the Hiſtorian in the 10*th chap. v.* 2. ſaith, was written *in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of* Media *and* Perſia; and therefore, without queſtion this Book of *Daniel*, was written by the ſame perſon who wrote the Affairs of *Daniel* and *Ezra*; and ſo alſo was the Book of *Nehemiah* called the Second Book of *Ezra*: ſo that we conclude, theſe four Books, namely, *Daniel*, *Ezra*, *Heſter*, and *Nehemiah*, to be written by one Hiſtorian; but who he was, I cannot ſo much as gueſs; but that we may know whoever he were, from whence he had the knowledge of the things he relates, and from whence he copy'd them out; we are to take notice, that the Governours and Princes of the *Jews* in the time of the Second Temple, as did their Kings in the time of the Firſt, kept Scribes

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or Hiſtoriographers, who writ *Annals*, and recorded what paſt; which *Annals*, or *Chronologies*, are every where cited in the Book of *Kings*; but thoſe of the Princes and Prieſts of the Second Temple, are quoted firſt in *Nehemiah*, *chap.* 12. *v.* 23. and alſo in the firſt Book of *Machabes*, *chap.* 16. *v.* 24. and no queſtion this Book of *Annals* was that Book mention'd (in the 32*th verſe* of the 9*th chap.* of *Heſter*) in which the Decree of Queen *Heſter*, and thoſe things that concern'd *Mordecai* were written; which Book we agree with *Aben Ezra* was loſt; and out of this Book of *Annals*, all things contain'd in the four Books we have laſt mention'd, were in all probability taken and copy'd; for there is no other Book quoted by the writer of theſe four, nor do we know any other of publick Authority. That theſe four Books were not written either by *Ezra* or *Nehemiah*, appears by what is ſaid in the 9*th* and 10*th verſes* of the 12*th chap.* of *Nehem.* where the Genealogy of the High-Prieſt *Jeſuah*, is deriv'd down to *Jaduah* the ſixth High-prieſt, who went to meet *Alexander the Great*, when he had almoſt conquer'd the Kingdom of *Perſia*; as appears in the 2*d.* Book and 8*th chap.* of *Joſephus*'s *Antiquities*; or as *Philo Judæus* ſaith in *Libro temporum*, the ſixth and laſt High-prieſt under the *Perſian* Monarchy; which

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is likewiſe plainly declar'd in the *22th verſe* of the aforeſaid *12th chap.* of *Nehem.* where the Hiſtorian ſaith, The *Levites* in the days of *Eliaſhib*, *Joiada*, *Johanan*, and *Jaduah*, were recorded Prieſts to the Reign of *Darius* the *Perſian*; that is, in the *Annals* of that Government. And ſure, no Man will believe, that *Hezra* or *Nehemiah* were ſo long liv'd, to ſurvive fourteen *Perſian* Kings; for *Cyrus* the firſt King of *Perſia*, was he that gave the *Jews* liberty to rebuild their Temple, and from him to *Darius* the fourteenth and laſt King of the *Perſians*, are reckoned 230 years: therefore without all doubt, theſe four Books I have mention'd, were written long after *Judas Maccabeus* reſtor'd the worſhip of the Temple; and alſo, becauſe at that time were ſpurious counterfeit Books of *Daniel*, *Heſdras* and *Heſter* publiſh'd by ſome malicious perſons, who were of the Sect of the *Zadduces*; for the *Phariſees* would never own them: and tho' in the Book which we call the *4th* of *Eſdras* there are ſome fabulous ſtories, which we alſo find in the *Talmud*; yet they ought not to be fathered on the *Phariſees*; for there is no Man of ſenſe but believes thoſe Tales were added by ſome trifling fellow, perhaps to render the Phariſaical Traditions ridiculous, or to make the people of that time believe, that the Propheſies of *Daniel* were fulfill'd,

thereby

thereby to confirm them in their Religion, and in the midſt of ſo many and great Calamities, to keep them from deſpair: But tho' theſe Books be of no great Antiquity, yet many faults (I ſuppoſe, through haſte in thoſe who copy'd them out) have crept into them; for in theſe, as in the reſt, are many Marginal Notes, (of which we ſpake in the former Chapter) and alſo ſome places for which no excuſe can be made; but if it be granted, that the Marginal Readings of theſe Books, be as the *Phariſees* would have it, as ancient as the Writers themſelves, then it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the Scribes (if they were more than one) put theſe Notes into the Margent, becauſe they did not find the *Annals*, from whence they copy'd out the Books perfectly written; and tho' ſome faults be very plain and obvious, yet the Scribes would not be ſo bold to alter or mend the Writings of their Anceſtors. Of this particular I have ſaid enough, and I now paſs on to ſhew thoſe errors whereof no notice is taken in the Margent. I cannot tell how many I meet with in the 2*d chap* of *Ezra*, for in the 64*th verſe* it is ſaid, that the whole Congregation together, of thoſe that went up out of Captivity to *Jeruſalem*, was forty two thouſand three hundred and threeſcore; and yet if the particular numbers throughout the

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whole Chapter, be exactly ſumm'd up and added together, they make the total to be no more than twenty nine thouſand eight hundred and eighteen; ſo that there is an error in the total, or particular numbers. Now 'tis moſt likely the total number was not miſtaken, but ſet down right, becauſe every one might keep that in memory, tho' he could not remember the particular numbers; had there been any error or miſtake in the total, every body would have known it, and it might have been eaſily mended, which is confirm'd by the *7th chap.* of *Nehemiah*, which tells us, that the whole number of them that came up from the Captivity, was the very ſame mention'd in the *2d chap* of *Ezra*; but the particular numbers very much differ; for ſome are more, and others leſs in *Nehemiah*, than they are in *Ezra*, and amount in all to thirty one thouſand eighty nine; ſo that there is no doubt, but that the errors as well in the Book of *Ezra*, as of *Nehemiah*, were in the particular numbers: Commentators rack their Wits and Inventions, to reconcile theſe apparent contradictions; and while they adore the very Words and Letters of Scripture, do nothing, as we have already ſaid, but expoſe the Writers of the Bible to Contempt; as if they knew not how to ſpeak, or put that which was ſpoken by them into

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any order; yea, they do nothing but make that part of Scripture which is plain, obſcure: For if every Man ſhould take a liberty of explaining Scripture, as they do, we could not be ſure of the true ſenſe of any part thereof: I am perſwaded, thoſe Commentators themſelves, tho' they with ſo much zeal excuſe the Writers of the *Old Teſtament*, would count any other Man a ridiculous Hiſtorian, who ſhould write as they have done; and if they think him a Blaſphemer, who ſays the Scripture is in ſome places faulty, what ſhall I ſay of thoſe Men, who bely the Scripture, and ſo expoſe the holy Pen-men thereof, as if they knew not how to ſpeak; and deny the plain and clear ſenſe of Scripture? What in it can be plainer, than that *Eſdras* and his fellow Prieſts in the ſecond Chapter of that Book which is ſaid to be his, took a particular account of all that went up to *Jeruſalem*; ſeeing the number of them is ſet down, who could not derive their Pedigree, as well as theirs that could? And what is more clear, than that *Nehemiah*, as appears by the *7th chap.* and *5th verſe* of that Book, only copy'd out the Regiſter which *Eſdras* had made? Who ever makes any other Expoſition thereof, denies the true ſenſe of Scripture, and conſequently, the Scripture it ſelf. 'Tis ridiculous Piety to pretend to rectify one

one place of Scripture by another, when plain places are darkened by obſcure, and thoſe that are right and true corrected and corrupted by thoſe that are falſe and erroneous; but God forbid I ſhould call them Blaſphemers, who have no malicious intentions, becauſe there is no Man free from Error. Beſide the Errors which are in the particular numbers, both of *Eſdras* and *Nehemiah*'s Genealogy, there are divers in the names of the Families, more in the very Pedigrees, in the Hiſtories, and, I fear, likewiſe in the very Propheſies themſelves; for the Propheſie of *Jeremy* in the 22*th chap.* againſt *Jehoiachim*, which ſays, He ſhould be buried with the burial of an Aſs, drawn and caſt forth beyond the Gates of *Jeruſalem*, doth not at all agree with the Hiſtory of him in the laſt Chapter of the 2*d.* Book of *Kings*; no nor with what is related of him in the laſt Chapter of *Jeremy*; eſpecially, in the laſt Verſe; neither do I ſee any reaſon why *Jeremy* ſhould tell King *Zedechiah*, that he ſhould die in peace, *Jerem. chap.* 34. *v.*5. who was taken Captive, and after he had ſeen his Children ſlain before his Face, had his own Eyes put out. If Propheſies may be interpreted according to events, the names of thoſe two Kings ſeem to be miſtaken one for the other, but that is too paridoxical to be maintain'd, and I had rather leave

leave the point under an impoſſibility of being determin'd, ſeeing if there be any error in it, it muſt be the fault of the Hiſtorian, and not in the Original Copies from whence he wrote. Of any other Errors I will take no particular notice, ſeeing I cannot without troubling the Reader, becauſe they have been already noted by others. *Rabbi Solomon* finding the manifeſt contradictions which are in the erroneous Genealogies, doth in his Commentaries on the 8*th chap.* of the firſt Book of *Chronicles*, break out into theſe words, *Eſdras*, (whom he ſuppoſeth to have written the *Chronicles*) *called the Sons of* Benjamin *by wrong names, and deriv'd his Pedigree otherwiſe than we find it in the Book of* Geneſis, *and deſcribes the greateſt part of the Cities of the* Levites, *otherwiſe than* Joſhua *did, becauſe he met with different Originals:* And a little after ſaith, *The Genealogy of* Gibeon, *and others, is twice and diverſly repeated, becauſe* Eſdras *found different Regiſters of each Genealogy; and in copying them out, follow'd thoſe whereof the greater number did agree; but when the number of differing Genealogies was equal, he wrote after the Original of both:* So that it appears by *Rabbi Solomon*'s own confeſſion, theſe Books were copied from uncertain, and imperfect Originals: The Commentators themſelves, many times do nothing more than ſhew the

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cauſes of the errors, and I believe, that no perſon of any ſound Judgment, can think that the Sacred Hiſtorians, did write purpoſely to contradict themſelves: Perhaps it will be ſaid, I go about to overthrow the Scripture, and give occaſion to ſuſpect, that it is every where faulty; but I have prov'd the contrary, for I hereby vindicate the Scripture, and provide againſt the adulterating and corrupting thereof in thoſe places which are clear and true. It doth not follow, that becauſe ſome places are faulty, therefore all muſt be ſo: becauſe every Book is in ſome places falſe, 'tis no good ground to conclude it is no where true; eſpecially when the Stile of it is perſpicuous, and the meaning of the Author perfectly known. So much for the Books of the *Old Teſtament*: Now by what hath been ſaid, we may eaſily conclude, that before the time of *Judas Maccabæus*, no Books were eſteemed Canonical, but thoſe which we now have from the *Phariſees* of the Second Temple, (who likewiſe inſtituted ſet forms of Prayer) theſe Books being ſelected from many others, and only by their Decree receiv'd into the Canon: he therefore that will demonſtrate the Authority of Holy Scripture, is bound to prove the Authority of every particular Book, the proving any one to be Divine, is not enough to prove

the Divinity of all; unleſs it be granted, that the Council of the *Phariſees* could not err, which is impoſſible for any Man to make good; the reaſon which inclines me to believe, that none but the *Phariſees* choſe the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, and made them Sacred by Canon; is, becauſe the laſt Chapter of *Daniel* declares, That there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead, which the *Zadduces* utterly deny'd. Moreover in the Treatiſe of the *Sabbath*, *chap.* 2. *fol.* 30. *parag.* the 2*d*, *Rabbi Jehuda* ſays, *The learned in the Law endeavour'd to ſuppreſs the Book of* Eccleſiaſtes, *becauſe many expreſſions in it, were contrary* (which obſerve) *to the Books of the Law of* Moſes; *but the reaſon why it was not ſuppreſs'd, was, becauſe it begun and ended according to the Law:* A little after he ſaith, *They would alſo have conceal'd the Book of* Proverbs; and laſtly, in the firſt Chapter of the ſame Treatiſe, *fol.* 13*th*, theſe are his words, *Truly I name the Man for kindneſs ſake, had it not been for* Neguniah *the Son of* Hiskiah, *the Book of* Ezechiel *had been abſconded, becauſe there are expreſſions in it repugnant to the words of the Law:* By all which it is manifeſt, that the learned in the Law, held a Council to determin what Books ſhould be receiv'd for Sacred, and what ſhould be rejected, ſo that whoever will be ſure of the Authority of all,

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muſt ſearch into the Council, and know upon what ground and reaſon every Book was receiv'd. I ſhould now examin the Books of the *New Teſtament*, but I hear it hath been already done by Men learned in the Sciences, and skilful in Tongues; I am not Grecian good enough to undertake it, beſide we want Original Copies of thoſe Books which were written in Hebrew, and therefore I will not ingage my ſelf in the buſineſs, but only obſerve ſome things which make to my main purpoſe, and that ſhall be the work of my next Chapter.

CHAP. XI.

Enquires whether the Apoſtles wrote their Epiſtles, *as Apoſtles and Prophets, or only as Teachers; and ſheweth what is the Office of an Apoſtle.*

WHoever reads the *New Teſtament*, muſt be convinc'd, that the Apoſtles were Prophets, but becauſe the Prophets, (as I have ſhew'd in the end of the firſt Chapter) did but ſeldom, and not al-

ways ſpeak by Revelation; it may very well be a Queſtion, Whether the Apoſtles, like *Moſes*, *Jeremy*, and others, did by expreſs Command and Revelation write their *Epiſtles* as Prophets, or elſe, only as private Men and Teachers; eſpecially, becauſe in the *1ſt Epiſt.* to the *Corinthians*, *chap.* 14. *v.* 6. *Paul* in expreſs terms declares, there are two ſorts of ſpeaking, the one by Revelation, the other by Knowledge; I ſay therefore, it may be doubted, whether the Apoſtles in their Writings did Propheſie or inſtruct Their Stile, if we mark it, is very far different from that us'd in Propheſie; it was alway the cuſtom of the Prophets to declare, That they ſpake by the Command of God, ſtill beginning with expreſſions like theſe, *So ſaith the Lord: The Lord of Hoſts ſaith, The Word and Decree of the Lord*; which they did uſe not only in their publick Speeches, but alſo in their Letters or Writings, which contain'd Revelations; as appears in the Letter written by *Elijah* the Prophet to King *Jehoram*, (*2d* Book of *Chron. chap* 21. *v* 12.) and there came a Writing to him from *Elijah* the Prophet ſaying, *Thus ſaith the Lord God*; but in the Apoſtles Writings, we meet with no ſuch expreſſions, but the clean contrary; *1ſt Epiſt. Corinth. chap.* 7. *v.* 40. *Paul* ſays he ſpeaks after his own Judgment: Yea, in many

many places we find expreſſions which argue a doubtful and uncertain mind; as in the *Epiſt.* to the *Rom. chap.* 3. *v.* 28. *Therefore we conclude*: And *Rom. chap.* 8 *v.* 18. *for I reckon*, and many of the like kind. Beſide theſe there are other manners of ſpeaking, which do not at all ſavor of Prophetical Authority; as in the *1ſt Epiſt. Corinth. chap.* 7. *v.* 6. *But I ſpeak this by permiſſion, not of commandment:* and in the 25. *verſe* of the ſame *chap. I give my Judgment as a Man who hath obtain'd mercy of the Lord to be faithful*; and it is to be obſerv'd, That when *Paul* in this Chapter ſpeaks, as if he did not know whether he had, or had not a command from the Lord for what he ſaid, it is not to be underſtood of a Command from God by Revelation, but only, that he preach'd that Doctrine, which Chriſt the Lord taught his Diſciples in the Mount. Moreover, if we obſerve in what manner the Apoſtles deliver the Doctrine of the Goſpel in their Writings, we ſhall find it much different from the Prophets way of inſtructing; for the Apoſtles are always found reaſoning, inſomuch that they ſeem rather to diſpute than Propheſie. Propheſies contain nothing but poſitive Opinions and Decrees therefore God is always introduced, not arguing with Reaſon, but peremptorily commanding by the Power

and Soveraignty of his Nature and Eſſence: Prophetieal Authority allows of no rational diſputing; for whoever will by reaſoning confirm his Opinions, doth in ſo doing ſubmit them to the Arbitrary Judgment of another; as doth *Paul* reaſoning in his *1ſt. Epiſt.* to the *Corinth. chap.* 10. *v.* 15. *I ſpeak as to wiſe men, judge ye what I ſay:* And laſtly, becauſe the Prophets did not underſtand the things that were reveal'd to them by Reaſon and Natural Knowledge, as we have ſhewed in the firſt Chapter; tho' ſome things in the *Pentateuch*, ſeem to be concluded and confirmed by Inference and Illation; yet if we conſider them, they cannot be taken for peremptory and deciſive Arguments: (For example) when *Moſes* ſaid to the *Iſraelites*, *Deut. chap.* 21. *v.* 27. *Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious againſt the Lord, and how much more after my death.* We are not here to think, that this was an Argument uſed to convince the *Iſraelites* by Reaſon, that they would certainly after *Moſes* death depart from the worſhip of God, becauſe the Argument had been falſe, as may be prov'd by Scripture; for the people perſevered conſtantly in it during the life of *Joſhua* and the Elders; and afterwards alſo in the life time of *Samuel*, *David*, and *Solomon*: theſe words therefore of *Moſes*,

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were but a moral manner of ſpeaking, which he Rhetorically us'd, the more ſtrongly to imagin and foretel, that peoples future defection; the reaſon why I do not ſay, that *Moſes* to make his Prediction true, ſpake theſe words of himſelf, and not by Revelation as a Prophet, is, becauſe in the 21 *verſe* of the ſame Chapter, God reveals to *Moſes* in other words, what the people would do; ſo that there was no need of reaſoning to make *Moſes* ſurer of this Prediction and Decree; but it was only neceſſary to give him a livelier repreſentation thereof in his imagination, (as I have ſhewed in the firſt Chapter) which could be done no better way, than by imagining that the peoples preſent rebellious Humor, which he had ſo often try'd, would be the very ſame for the future; ſo that we are not to think, *Moſes*'s Arguments which we meet with in the *Petanteuch*, to be drawn from the Repoſitories of Reaſon, but to be taken only for manners of ſpeaking, whereby he did more lively imagin, and more effectually expreſs God's Decrees. I will not deny, but that the Prophets might reaſon and argue by Revelation; but that which I maintain, is, That the Prophets by how much more rational the Arguments were which they uſed, ſo much more natural did their Knowledge appear, which they

had of things revealed, and that the Prophets knowledge was ſupernatural, chiefly appear'd in their ſpeaking Dogmatically, Imperiouſly, and Sententiouſly; ſo that *Moſes* the chief Prophet, never made uſe of any Logical Argument, and I therefore conclude, *Paul*'s long Deductions and Reaſonings, which we find in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, were never written by Supernatural Revelation, and the manner of ſpeaking and arguing in the Writings of the Apoſtles, doth clearly ſhew, that they were not by Divine Revelation and Command, but were the dictates of their own natural Reaſon, and contain nothing but brotherly admonitions, full of gentleneſs and kindneſs, (no evidence of Prophetical Authority) ſuch as is that excuſe in the 15. *chap.* to the *Rom. verſe* 15. *Brethren I have written the more boldly unto you*; and this Opinion may with the greater confidence be maintain'd, becauſe we no where read that the Apoſtles were commanded to Write, but only to Preach where ever they went, and to confirm their Doctrine by Signs; for their Preſence and Signs were abſolutely requir'd to convert the Nations to Chriſtianity, and confirm them in it; as *Paul* himſelf in his *Epiſt.* to the *Rom. chap.* 1. *v* 11. expreſly declares, *I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end*

you

you may be eſtabliſh'd: But here it may be objected, that if we allow the Apoſtles did not write as Prophets, then by the ſame reaſon it may be concluded, they did not preach as Prophets; for when they went hither and thither to preach, they did it not by expreſs Command, as did the Prophets in time paſt. We read in the *Old Teſtament*, *Jonah* went to *Nineveh* to preach, that he was expreſly ſent thither, and that which he was there to preach was reveal'd to him. We are told at large, that *Moſes* was ſent into *Egypt* by God, what he was commanded to ſay to the people of *Iſrael*, and to King *Pharaoh*, what Signs and Wonders alſo he was to do in their preſence to make them believe. *Iſaiah*, *Jeremy*, and *Ezekiel* were expreſly commanded to preach to the *Iſraelites*. Laſtly, the Prophets never preached any thing, but what the Scripture teſtifies they receiv'd from God, but of the Apoſtles we very ſeldom read any ſuch thing, when they went hither and thither to preach; but on the contrary, we find the Apoſtles according to their own Will and Inclination, choſe what places they would preach in, as appears by that contention even to ſeparation between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act. chap.* 15. *v.* 39. and that the Apoſtles many times in vain attempted to go to ſome particular places, whereof we

we have inſtances in *Paul* himſelf, who ſays in his firſt Chapter to the *Romans*, *v.* 13. *I would not have you ignorant, that oftentimes I purpoſed to come to you, but was let hitherto*; and *chap.* 15. *v.* 22. *For which cauſe I have been often hindred from coming to you.* And laſtly, in the 16*th chap.* 1*ſt Epiſt.* to the *Corinth. v.* 12. he ſaith, *As touching our brother* Apollos, *I greatly deſir'd him to come unto you with the Brethren, but his Will was not at all to come at this time, but he will come when he ſhall have convenient time*; ſo that from ſuch expreſſions as theſe, from the Apoſtles contention, and becauſe when they went hither and thither to preach, the Scripture doth no where teſtify as it did of the Ancient Prophets, that they went by the expreſs command of God; we ought to conclude, that the Apoſtles did not preach as Prophets, but as Men who were only Teachers. But this Objection may be eaſily anſwered, if we take notice of the difference between the calling of Apoſtles in the *New*, and of Prophets in the *Old Teſtament*, for the Prophets were not called to Preach and Propheſie to all Nations in general, but only to ſome particular people, for which an Expreſs and particular Command was neceſſary; but the Apoſtles were called to preach to all Nations without exception, and to convert them to *Chriſt*, ſo that where-

where-ever they went they executed his Commiſſion; nor was there any neceſſity before they went, that which they were to preach ſhould be reveal'd to them, they being thoſe Diſciples to whom *Chriſt* ſaid, *Matth. chap.* 10. *v.* 19, 20. *When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it ſhall be given unto you in that ſame hour, what you ſhall ſpeak:* We therefore conclude, the Apoſtles had thoſe things by particular Revelation, which they perſonally preach'd and confirm'd by Signs, but what they ſimply ſpake or writ without Signs to confirm it, that proceeded only from their Natural Reaſon and Knowledge, as you ſee in the forecited 14*th chap.* of the 1*ſt Epiſt.* to the *Corinth. v.* 6. That all their Epiſtles begin with the Declaration and Approbation of their Apoſtleſhip, makes nothing againſt me; for on the Apoſtles, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, was not only beſtow'd the gift of Propheſie, but they had alſo Authority given them to teach and inſtruct: Upon this ground the Apoſtles began and wrote their *Epiſtles* with the declaration of their Apoſtleſhip, and perhaps to gain upon the Minds of their Readers, and to ſtir them up to Attention, did in the firſt place teſtify, That they were thoſe Men, who by their Preaching, were known to all Believers; and who, by ſuch clear proofs

proofs had made it evident, they taught the true Religion, and right way to Salvation. What I find in theſe Epiſtles concerning the Call of the Apoſtles, and of the Divine and Holy Spirit wherewith they were inſpir'd, relates only to their Preaching, except it be in thoſe places, where by *the Spirit of God*, and *the holy Spirit* is meant only a ſound right Judgment, and a pure ſanctify'd Mind devoted to God, (of which we have ſpoken in our firſt Chapter.) For example, *Paul*, in 1 *Corinth chap.* 7. *v.* 40. ſaith, *But ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide after my Judgment, and I think alſo I have the Spirit of God*; where by the Spirit of God is underſtood his own Opinion, as the Context proves; his meaning is, that in his Judgment and Opinion, the Widdow was happy who would not marry a ſecond Huſband, for he himſelf had reſolv'd to live ſingle, and therefore thought himſelf happy: Of this kind we find other expreſſions, which I think needleſs to mention: If then it paſs for granted, That the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles were the dictates only of Natural Reaſon, how could the Apoſtles only by Natural Reaſon, teach thoſe things which did not fall within the compaſs of it? Conſider what I have ſaid in the ſeventh Chapter of this Treatiſe, concerning the Interpretation of Scripture, and we ſhall find

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no difficulty in the Queſtion; for tho' many things contain'd in the Bible, often ſurpaſs our Capacity and Underſtanding, yet we may ſafely diſpute of them, provided we admit of no Principles but what are fetch'd from the Scripture; and upon this ground the Apoſtles might conclude, collect, and as they pleas'd, teach many of thoſe things which they had ſeen, heard, and were reveal'd to them. Tho' Religion, as it was preach'd by the Apoſtles, in barely publiſhing the Hiſtory of *Chriſt*, is not to be comprehended by Natural Reaſon, yet the principal and chiefeſt part thereof, which conſiſts, as doth the whole Doctrine of *Chriſt*, in moral Precepts and Inſtructions, every Man by Natural Light may attain: The Apoſtles did not ſtand in need of Supernatural Illumination, to fit and apply Religion which they had before confirm'd by Signs, to every Man's ordinary Capacity, that it might be readily embraced; nor was Supernatural Aſſiſtance neceſſary to mind Men of it, the deſign, and end of all the Epiſtles, is, to teach and admoniſh Men to live that kind of life, which every one of the Apoſtles judg'd beſt to confirm and eſtabliſh them in Religion: and here we are to remember, what was ſaid a little before, That the Apoſtles were not only enabled to preach the Hiſtory of *Chriſt*,

Chriſt, and confirm what they preach'd by Signs as Prophets; but had alſo Power and Authority to admoniſh and inſtruct Men, in that way which every particular Apoſtle thought beſt; both which gifts *Paul* mentions in his *2d Epiſt.* to *Timothy chap.* 1. *v.* 11. *Whereunto I am appointed a Preacher, and an Apoſtle, and teacher of the* Gentiles: Likewiſe in his *1ſt Epiſt.* to *Timothy, chap.* 2. *v.* 7. *Whereunto I am ordain'd a Preacher, and an Apoſtle: (I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, and lie not) a teacher of the* Gentiles *in Faith and Verity*; which Texts clearly prove both his Offices of Apoſtle and Doctor, but his Authority to warn and inſtruct, whomſoever, and whenſoever he pleas'd, he expreſly declares in his Epiſtle to *Philemon*, verſes the 8*th* and 9*th*, *Tho' I might be much bold in Chriſt, to enjoyn thee that which is convenient, yet for loves ſake I rather beſeech thee*, whence we are to note, that if thoſe things which *Paul* was to command *Philemon*, had been receiv'd from God by *Paul* as a Prophet, and which, as a Prophet he ought to have commanded him; then it had not been lawful for *Paul*, to change that Command of God into Intreaties; it muſt therefore be neceſſarily underſtood, that *Paul* here ſpeaks of the liberty of Warning and Admoniſhing, which he had as a Teacher, and not as a Prophet. Tho' it be not clear-

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ly prov'd, that every Apoſtle might chuſe that way of teaching which he himſelf thought beſt, but only that they were both Prophets and Teachers by vertue of their Apoſtleſhip, yet Reaſon tells us, that whoever hath Power and Authority to teach, hath alſo Power and Liberty to chuſe his own way of doing it; but becauſe it will be more ſatisfactory to prove by Scripture, that every Apoſtle choſe his own particular way of teaching: Conſider what *Paul* himſelf ſaith in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, *chap.* 15. *v.* 20. *So have I ſtrived to preach the Goſpel, not where Chriſt was named, leſt I ſhould build upon another mans foundation*; if every one of the Apoſtles made uſe of the ſame way of teaching, and all built Chriſtian Religion upon the ſame Foundation, what reaſon had *Paul* to call thoſe Foundations another Mans? It muſt neceſſarily be concluded, that every one built Religion upon a ſeveral Foundation, and it was with the Apoſtles, as it is with other Doctors, who having a peculiar method of teaching, deſire alway to teach thoſe who are perfectly ignorant, and never learnt of any other Maſter. If we carefully read over the Epiſtles, we ſhall find that the Apoſtles did agree concerning Religion it ſelf, but differ'd about its Foundations. To eſtabliſh Men in Religion, and to prove that

Salvation

Salvation depended only upon the Grace and Mercy of God, *Paul*'s Doctrine was, that no Man ought to boaſt of his Works, but only of his Faith; and that no Man could be juſtify'd by Works, but only by Faith, (*Rom. chap.* 3. *v.* 27, 28.) By *Paul* alſo was preached the whole Doctrine of Predeſtination; but *James* on the other ſide, in his Epiſtle declares, that a Man is juſtify'd by Works, and not by Faith only, (*James chap.* 2. *v.* 24.) and in few words gives a brief account of Religion, not at all concerning himſelf with any of *Paul*'s Diſputations: Without doubt the Apoſtles building Religion upon ſeveral Foundations, hath been the original cauſe of all thoſe Controverſies and Schiſms, wherewith the Church was in the Apoſtles time, hath been ever ſince, and for ever will be troubled; unleſs Religion be purg'd and ſeparated from all Philoſophical Speculations, and reduced to thoſe few and plain Doctrines which *Chriſt* taught his Followers, which was impoſſible to be done by the Apoſtles themſelves; becauſe Men then knew not the Goſpel, and becauſe the novity of its Doctrine ſhould not offend their Ears, they as near as poſſible, ſuited and fitted it to the Genius and Diſpoſition of Men in that time, as appears by (the 1*ſt Epiſt.* to the *Corinth. chap.* 9. *v.* 19, 20.) and was built upon the moſt known

known Foundations, and receiv'd Principles of thoſe times; therefore none of the Apoſtles philoſophiz'd ſo much as *Paul*, who was called to preach to the *Gentiles*; the reſt preaching to the *Jews*, who were deſpiſers of Philoſophy, likewiſe apply'd themſelves to their Genius, (ſee the *Epiſt.* to the *Galath. chap.* 2. from the 11 *verſe* forward,) and preach'd Religion ſtrip'd naked from all Philoſophical Speculations: How happy likewiſe would our times be, could we ſee Religion freed from all Superſtition.

CHAP. XII.

Of the true Original Hand-writing of the Divine Law; *why Scripture is called* Holy? *and why the Word of God?* Laſtly, *That the Scripture, as it contains the Word of God, is derived down to us pure and uncorrupted.*

THey that look upon the *Bible*, however it be, as a Letter ſent from Heaven by God to Man, will certainly ex-

claim and ſay, I am guilty of the ſin againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, in maintaining, that the Word of God is faulty, maimed, adulterated, and contradictory to it ſelf; that we have but fragments of it, and that the Original Writing of the Covenant which God made with the *Jews* periſh'd; but I doubt not, would they well conſider the thing it ſelf, they would ceaſe their exclamations; for Reaſon, as well as the Opinion of the Prophets and Apoſtles, plainly declares, That the Eternal Word and Covenant of God, and true Religion is written in Mens Hearts, (that is) imprinted by God upon the Mind and Underſtanding of mankind; which is that true Hand-writing of God, which he ſealed with the Idea of himſelf; (that is) the Image of his own Divine Nature. Religion was firſt deliver'd to the *Jews* as a written Law, becauſe they were at that time in their Underſtanding, little more than Children; but afterwards *Moſes* (*Deut. chap.* 30. *v.*6.) and *Jeremy* (*chap.* 31. *v.*33.) propheſied, that in time to come, God would write his Law in their Hearts; ſo that the *Jews*, and, among them, chiefly the *Zaduces*, always contended for their Law written in Tables, which others did not, who had it engraven on their Hearts: He then that conſiders this, will find nothing in what I have ſaid, contrary to God's word, or that will weaken

en Faith and Religion; but rather, as I have ſhewed toward the end of the tenth Chapter, what will confirm and ſtrengthen both. Had not that been my intention, I had been altogether ſilent upon this Subject, and to avoid diſputes, would have freely granted, that there are deep Myſteries hidden in the Scripture: but becauſe from thence hath ſprung up intollerable Superſtition, and many other miſchievous inconveniences, of which I ſpake in the beginning of the ſeventh Chapter, I could not poſſibly paſs them by: Religion needs not be attired with any Superſtitious Ornaments, but rather loſeth part of its Beauty and Luſtre, when it is adorned with ſuch Fopperies. But ſome will ſay, That tho' the Divine Law be written in Mens Hearts, yet nevertheleſs the Scripture is the word of God, and therefore 'tis as unlawful to ſay of Scripture, as of the Word of God, that 'tis maimed or corrupted. I on the other ſide fear ſuch Men pretend too much Sanctity, and convert Religion into Superſtition; yea, that they worſhip Pictures and Images, (that is) Paper and Ink for the Word of God; this I know, that I have ſaid nothing misbecoming the Scripture or the Word of God; and that I have laid down no Poſition, which I have not made good by clear Reaſon; and there-

fore I may poſitively aver, that I have not publiſh'd any thing that is impious, or that ſavors of the leaſt impiety: I confeſs, ſome prophane perſons, to whom Religion is a burthen, may take a liberty of ſinning, and without any reaſon indulging their ſenſual pleaſure, may infer, that the Scripture is every where faulty and falſify'd, and conſequently of no Authority; to ſuch Men nothing will be an anſwer, for according to the common ſaying, that which is never ſo well and truly ſpoken, may be abuſed by an ill and ſiniſter Interpretation; they that are lovers of their Pleaſure, will take any occaſion to do it; and they who in time paſt had thoſe Originals, the Ark of the Covenant, the Prophets and Apoſtles themſelves, were not one jot the more obedient or the better for them, but all as well *Jews* as *Gentiles* were alike ſtill the ſame, and Vertue in all Ages was a thing very rare: But to clear all Scruples, I will now ſhew upon what ground and reaſon, Scripture or any other mute thing, may be called Sacred or Holy; next, what is indeed the Word of God, that it is not contained in a certain number of Books: And laſtly, that as it contains thoſe things which are neceſſary to Obedience and Salvation, it cannot be corrupted: By theſe particulars every one may eaſily judge, that I ſpeak nothing a-

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gainſt the Word of God, or give any occaſion for Men to be wicked or ungodly.

That is called Holy and Divine which is dedicated to Piety and the practice of Religion, and a thing continues Holy ſo long as Men make a Religious uſe thereof; when Men ceaſe to be Religious, that thing ceaſeth to be Sacred, and when the thing is uſed to impious purpoſes, then that thing which was before Sacred, becomes unholy and prophane: (For example) the very place called by *Jacob* the Patriarch *Beth-el*, the Houſe of God, becauſe he there worſhip'd God reveal'd to him; was afterwards called by the Prophets the Houſe of Iniquity, *Amos, chap. 5. v. 5. Hoſhea, chap. 10. v. 5.* becauſe the *Iſraelites*, by the Command of *Jeroboam*, did there ſacrifice to Idols. Another example will plainly prove the thing: Words have a certain ſignification, only by uſe and cuſtom; and if they be according to that uſe ſo diſpoſed, that they move Men who read them to Devotion, then thoſe words are eſteemed Sacred; and likewiſe the Book wherein they are written; but if afterward it come to paſs, that the uſe of thoſe words is loſt, and thereby the words become inſignificant, and the Book wherein ſuch words are, is quite neglected and laid aſide, either

through malice, or becauſe Men have no need of it, then the words and the Book, as they are of no uſe, ſo have they no Sanctity in them. Laſtly, If thoſe words come to be otherwiſe conſtrued, and Cuſtom ſo far prevail, as to give them a clean contrary ſenſe and ſignification, then the words and the Book which were before eſteemed Sacred, may become filthy and profane; whence it follows, that nothing can be abſolutely either Sacred or Profane, but only in reſpect of Mans Mind or Underſtanding; which clearly appears by many places of Scripture; I will quote only one or two; *Jeremy* (*chap. 7. v. 24.*) ſaith, the *Jews* did falſely call *Solomon's* Temple the Temple of God; for as he further ſaith in that Chapter, the Name of God could remain in that Temple no longer than it was frequented by Men who worſhip'd him, and maintain'd Juſtice; but when Murderers, Robbers, and Idolaters reſorted to it, 'twas then but a Den of Thieves. I have often wonder'd, that the Scripture no where declares what became of the Ark of the Covenant, certainly it was either loſt or burnt with the Temple, tho' nothing was eſteemed more Sacred and Venerable among the *Jews*. The Scripture then is Sacred, and its ſayings Divine, ſo long as Men are thereby moved to Devotion; but if the Scripture be

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quite neglected, as it was heretofore by the *Jews*, it is nothing but Paper and Ink, 'tis then profaned, and left liable to Corruption; and when it is corrupted and periſheth, it cannot be truly ſaid the Word of God is corrupted and loſt; as in the Prophet *Jeremy*'s time, it could not be truly ſaid the Temple of God was burnt, which *Jeremy* himſelf declareth of the Law; for *chap.* 8. *v.* 8. he reproves the Wicked in theſe words, *How do ye ſay we are wiſe, and the Law of the Lord is with us? Lo certainly in vain made he it, the Pen of the Scribes is in vain*; (that is) tho' ye have the Scripture, yet ye falſely ſay, you have the Law of God, ſince ye have made it of no effect: In like manner, when *Moſes* brake the firſt Tables, it cannot be ſaid, that in anger he caſt the Law of God out of his Hands and brake it, no perſon ought to think ſo, he brake only the Stones, which, tho' before accounted Sacred, becauſe upon them was engraven the Covenant by which the *Jews* bound themſelves to obey God, yet afterward had not the leaſt Sanctity in them, becauſe the People by worſhiping the Golden Calf, made that Covenant void: For the ſame cauſe the ſecond Tables, with the Ark wherein they were kept, might likewiſe periſh. 'Tis no wonder then if none of thoſe Originals are to be found, or that

the like ſhould befal the Books we have, when the very Original of Gods Law, the moſt Sacred of all things is utterly loſt: Let Men then forbear to charge me with impiety, ſeeing I have ſpoken nothing againſt the Word of God, nor have any way profaned it; if their anger be juſt, let it be vented againſt the people of old, whoſe wickedneſs prophaned and deſtroyed the Ark of God, the Temple, the Law, and all things elſe that were Sacred: If according to the 2*d Epiſt.* to the *Corinth. chap.* 3. *v.* 3. *The Epiſtle of Chriſt were written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleſhly Tables of the Heart:* Let Men ceaſe to adore the Letter, and not be ſo much concern'd for it. Having ſufficiently explain'd the Holineſs and Divinity of Scripture, let us now ſee what is properly meant by *Debar Jehovah* the word of God. *Debar* ſignifies Word, Speech, Decree, Thing; now upon what grounds any thing in the Hebrew Language may be ſaid to be God's, or have relation to God, I have ſhew'd in the firſt Chapter; ſo that I need not repeat what I have there ſaid, or in the ſixth Chapter, what I have ſaid of Miracles; 'tis evident what the Scripture means by the Word of God: To make the thing very clear, I need only declare, that when the Word of God is predicated of any

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Subject which is not God himſelf, it properly ſignifies that Divine Law, of which we treated in the fourth Chapter, namely, That Religion which is univerſal and common to all mankind, mention'd in *Iſaiah*, *chap.* 1. *v.* 10. where the Prophet declares, That the right way of living, conſiſted in Charity, and in a ſincere and pure Heart, which he calls the Law and Word of God: The Word of God is alſo taken Metaphorically, for the order or courſe of Nature, and Fate, (becauſe it follows and depends upon the Eternal Decree of the Divine Nature) particularly for whatever the Prophets foreſaw in this courſe of Nature; becauſe the Prophets underſtood future events, not by natural Cauſes, but thought them to be the Will and Decrees of God. Moreover, it is taken for that which any Prophet commanded or declared, becauſe he knew it not by Natural Light, but by the ſingular Vertue and gift of Propheſie; and more eſpecially, becauſe the Prophets (as we have ſhewed in the fourth Chapter) apprehended God under the notion of a Lawgiver; for theſe three reaſons then, the Scripture is called the Word of God, (namely) becauſe it teacheth us true Religion, whereof God from all Eternity is the Author. Secondly, becauſe it makes Propheſies to be God's Decrees: And laſtly, becauſe the Authors of

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thoſe Propheſies, taught for the moſt part that which they did not know by Natural Reaſon, but by a faculty and gift peculiar only to them, and introduced God ſpeaking as it were in them. Now tho' the Scripture contain many things which are meerly Hiſtorical, and may be unnderſtood by Natural Knowledge, yet the Scripture is called the Word of God, in reſpect of thoſe other particulars I have laſt mention'd; ſo that now we plainly ſee, why God is called the Author of the *Bible*; (namely) upon the account of teaching us what is true Religion, and not becauſe it contains, and hath communicated to us ſuch a certain number of Books. And hence we may alſo learn, that the *Bible* is divided into the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, becauſe before the coming of *Chriſt*, the Prophets Preached Religion as the Law of their Country, and by force of the Covenant made in *Moſes*'s time; but after *Chriſt*'s coming, becauſe the Apoſtles preached Religion upon *Chriſt*'s account, as a Law univerſal to all mankind; not that the Prophets and Apoſtles differ'd in Doctrine, or that the Books of either *Teſtament*, are the Deeds and Indentures of the Written Covenant; nor, laſtly, becauſe Natural Religion which is univerſal, is new, unleſs it be in reſpect of thoſe that knew it not, according to that ſaying of *John the Evangeliſt*,

Evangeliſt, chap. 1. *v.* 10. *He was in the world and the world knew him not.* If then we had not ſome of thoſe Books which the *Old* and *New Teſtament* contain, yet we ſhould not want God's Word, (as it properly ſignifies true Religion) for we do not think any part thereof is wanting, tho' we lack many of thoſe other excellent Writings, namely, the Book of the Law, which was ſo Religiouſly kept in the Temple, as the Original wherein the Covenant was firſt written, with many other Books of the Wars and Records of time, from whence the Books of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, which we now have, were tranſcribed and collected: And this is made good by many reaſons; firſt, becauſe the Books of both *Teſtaments* were not written at one and the ſame time, for the uſe of all Ages; but by chance for ſome particular people, and that as the Time and their particular Diſpoſition requir'd, which plainly appears, by the calling of the Prophets, who are called to warn and reprove the ungodly of their own time, and alſo by the Writings of the Apoſtles. Secondly, Becauſe underſtanding the Scripture, and the meaning of the Prophets, is one thing; but to underſtand the Mind of God (that is) the real truth of things is another; as appears by what hath been ſaid in the ſecond Chapter of Prophets;

phets; which diſtinction likewiſe holds in Hiſtories and Miracles, as we have ſhewed in the ſixth Chapter: But in underſtanding places which treat of true Religion and real Vertue, no ſuch diſtinction ought to be made. Thirdly, Becauſe the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, were choſen out of many others, and were approved and joyned together by a Council of the *Phariſees*; as we have declared in the tenth Chapter; and for the Books of the *New Teſtament*, they were receiv'd into the Canon by the Decrees of certain Councils, when ſeveral other Books, by many accounted Sacred, were rejected as Spurious: Theſe Councils both of *Phariſees* and *Chriſtians*, were made up of Men, who were no Prophets, but only learned Doctors; yet it muſt neceſſarily be granted, that in this choice they made the Word of God their Rule; ſo that before they gave their Approbation to the Books, they ought to know what was the Word of God. Fourthly, Becauſe as we have ſhewed in the preceding Chapter, the Apoſtles did not write as Prophets, but only as Teachers, and choſe that way of inſtructing, which every one judged moſt eaſie for his Diſciples; from whence it follows, as we have concluded in the end of the ſaid Chapter, that their Writings contain many things, whereof in Reſpect to Religion we have

have no abſolute need. Fifthly and laſtly, Becauſe in the *New Teſtament*, there are four whom we call *Evangeliſts*; but who believes it was God's expreſs Will, that the Hiſtory of *Chriſt* ſhould be four times told and deliver'd to Men in Writing? Tho' things may be contain'd in one, which are not in another, and that one helps to underſtand another; we muſt not therefore conclude, that all things which the four declare, are abſolutely neceſſary to be known, and that God made choice of them to write purpoſely, that the Hiſtory of *Chriſt* might be the better underſtood; for every one preach'd his own Goſpel in ſeveral places, and every one wrote what he preach'd plainly, that he might the more faithfully relate the Hiſtory of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and not for any explanation to the reſt. If by mutually comparing them together, they are ſometimes more eaſily and better underſtood, that happens by chance, and only in very few places, of which, tho' we were ignorant, the Hiſtory notwithſtanding would be very perſpicuous, and Men nevertheleſs bleſſed and happy. Having ſhewed that the Scripture in reſpect of Religion only, and the univerſal Divine Law, is properly called Scripture: It now remains to prove, that in this reſpect, and as it is properly ſo call'd, it is neither maimed, faulty,

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or corrupted; and here I call that thing faulty, maimed and corrupted, which is ſo falſely written and compos'd, that the true ſenſe of the words, cannot either by the uſe of the Language, or by the Scripture it ſelf be found out; for I do not affirm, that the Scripture, as it contains the Divine Law, always obſerves the ſame letters, points, accents and words, (I leave that to the *Maſorites* who ſo ſuperſtitiouſly adore the Letter) but only that the ſignification and ſenſe (in reſpect of which only, any Speech is to be called Divine) is derived to us uncorrupted, tho' the words whereby that ſenſe was ſignified, have been often changed; that cannot, as we have ſaid, detract from the Sacredneſs of Scripture, for it would not have been one jot leſs Divine, had it been written in other Words, or in any other Language. That we have received the Divine Law in this reſpect uncorrupted, no body can queſtion, for by the Scripture it ſelf, without any doubt or difficulty we perceive, that the ſumm thereof is to love God above all things, and our Neighbours as our ſelves. This cannot be adulterated, nor written by a too haſty erring Pen, for if the Scripture ever taught any other thing, it muſt neceſſarily teach all other things; otherwiſe ſeeing this is the Foundation of all Religion, take away this Foundation,

dation, and the whole Fabrick falls to the ground; and if this were not ſo, the Scripture were not Scripture, but quite another Book. It remains then without Controverſie, this was always the Doctrine of Scripture, and conſequently, that no error could creep into it to corrupt its Senſe, which would have been quickly perceiv'd by every body, and who ever had gone about to corrupt it, his Malice would have preſently appear'd: If then this Foundation be immoveable and incorruptible, the ſame muſt be concluded of other things, which indiſputably follow from it, and which are alſo fundamentals; as that God is, that he provides for all, that he is Omnipotent, and that he hath decreed it ſhall go well with Good, and ill with Wicked-men, and that our Salvation depends only upon his Grace and Mercy. Theſe things the Scripture every where plainly teacheth, and ought always to teach, elſe all other things were vain and without any Foundation: 'Tis as impoſſible to corrupt any other Moral Doctrines, which are built upon, and evidently follow from this Foundation; namely, to do juſtice, to ſuccour thoſe that are in want and diſtreſs; not to kill, not to covet, and none of theſe moral Precepts can be miſ-interpreted or corrupted by malice, or obliterated by length of time: If any of

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theſe things ſhould be blotted out, they would be again dictated to mankind, by the firſt general Foundation, and more eſpecially by the Doctrine of *Charity* which is every where ſo much commended in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*: Should it be granted, that there is no wickedneſs which ever entred into the Heart of Man, which ſome perſon or other hath not committed, yet never was there any Man, who to excuſe or juſtifie his Crimes, endeavour'd to blot out the Laws, or to preach Impiety for good and wholſome Doctrine. Tho' it be every Man's nature, whether King or Subject, when he hath done any thing that is evil, to palliate the fact with ſuch Circumſtances, as may make it appear as little as is poſſible diſhoneſt or unjuſt. We therefore conclude, that the Univerſal Divine Law, which the Scripture teacheth, is deliver'd and derived to us pure and incorruptible. There are other things alſo, which have been faithfully deliver'd to us, namely, the general Collection of Scripture Hiſtories, becauſe they are univerſally known. The common people of the *Jews*, were wont to ſing the Antiquities and Ancient Facts of their Nation, in *Pſalms* or *Songs*. The principal things done by *Chriſt* and his Paſſion, were quickly publiſh'd through the whole *Roman* Empire,

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and therefore 'tis impoſſible to believe, unleſs the greateſt part of mankind ſhould agree in that which is incredible, that the principal things in Scripture Hiſtories ſhould be deliver'd to poſterity, otherwiſe than they were firſt receiv'd. Whatever then is adulterated or faulty, muſt happen only in this or that Circumſtance of a Propheſie or Hiſtory, the more to move people to Devotion, or in ſome Miracle to puzzle and nonplus Philoſophers; or laſtly, in matters Speculative, after they were brought into Religion by Schiſmaticks, abuſing Divine Authority to ſupport their own inventions: But whether theſe things be or be not adulterated and corrupted, doth not at all concern Salvation, which I will expreſly ſhew in the following Chapter, tho' I think enough hath been already ſaid to prove it, in this, and the ſecond Chapter.

CHAP. XIII.

Shews, that the Scripture teacheth nothing but what is very plain; intending nothing but Mens Obedience; neither doth it teach or declare any other thing of the Divine Nature, than what a Man may in a right courſe of life, in ſome degree imitate.

WE have already declared in the ſecond Chapter of this Treatiſe, that the Prophets did not ſo much excel in perfection of Mind and Underſtanding, as in a ſingular faculty and power of Imagination: That God revealed to them no deep points of Philoſophy, but only things very plain and eaſie, condeſending and applying himſelf to their Capacities, and preconceiv'd Opinions. We have in the fifth Chapter ſhewn, that the Scripture delivers and teacheth things in ſuch a manner, as may render them moſt eaſie to be underſtood by every Man, and that it doth not prove, deduce, and link things together,

ther, by maxims and definitions, but only plainly relates and declares things; and to make Men believe, confirms what it ſays by Experience, (that is) by Miracles and Hiſtories; making uſe of ſuch a Stile, and ſuch Expreſſions, as are moſt likely to move and prevail upon the Minds of the common people; of which I have ſpoken in proving the third Particular of the ſixth Chapter. Laſtly, I have ſhew'd in the ſeventh Chapter, that the difficulty of underſtanding the Scripture, lies only in the Language wherein it was originally written, and not in the ſublimity and abſtruceneſs of the Subject whereof it treats; and moreover, that the Prophets did not preach only to the Learned, but in general to all the *Jews*; and that the Apoſtles preached the Doctrine of the Goſpel, in Churches where there was a common and univerſal Aſſembly of all people: by all which it evidently appears, that Scripture Doctrine contains no high Speculations, nor Philoſophical Arguments, but only things plain and intelligible by the meaneſt and dulleſt Capacities. I ſtrangely admire the accuteneſs of thoſe Men, who diſcover in the Scripture Myſteries ſo profound, that 'tis impoſſible for the Tongue of Man to unfold them, and who have fill'd Religion with ſo many Philoſophical Speculations, that they have

turn'd the Church into an Academy, Religion into a Science, or rather into Wrangling and Diſpute: But 'tis no wonder that Men who boaſt of Supernatural Illumination ſhould pretend to more than we find in Philoſophers, who own they have no more than what is Natural. I would really admire thoſe illuminated Men, could they teach us any new Speculations, or any thing that was not common and vulgar amongſt the Heathen Philoſophers, whom they call Blind: For if you inquire what are thoſe profound Myſteries, theſe inſpir'd Men perceive in Scripture, they can tell us of nothing beyond the idle fancies and conceits of *Plato* and *Ariſtotle*, which look more like the Dreams of Ideots than Diſcoveries made out of Scripture by Learned Men. I do not poſitively maintain, that nothing belongs to Scripture Doctrine, which is matter of meer Speculation, for in the preceding Chapter I have mentioned ſome fundamentals of Scripture that are ſo; but my meaning is, they are very few and very plain; what they are, and upon what reaſon determin'd to be ſo, I come now to ſhew, which will be eaſily done, after that we know the Scriptures chief deſign was not to teach Arts and Sciences, and that it requires from Men nothing but Obedience, condemning their Obſtinacy,

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not their Ignorance: Moreover, becauſe Obedience toward God, conſiſts only in loving our Neighbour, (for whoever loveth his Neighbour purpoſely to obey God, he, as *Paul* ſaith, *Rom. chap.* 13. *v.* 8. hath fulfilled the Law) it follows, that no other Knowledge is commended in Scripture, but that which is neceſſary to all Men, that they may, according to this Precept of loving our Neighbour, obey God; which Knowledge, if Men have not, they muſt neceſſarily be ſtubborn, or at leaſt without the diſcipline of Obedience; but all other Speculations which do not directly tend to this end, whether they concern the knowledge of God, or of natural things, they have nothing to do with Scripture, and are to be excluded out of revealed Religion. Now tho' theſe things be obvious to every Man, yet becauſe upon this point depends the ending of all debate in Religion; I will demonſtrate and explain the thing as fully and clearly as is poſſible; which to perform, we in the firſt place ought to prove, That an intellectual and accurate knowledge of God, is not a gift ſo common to all Believers as is Obedience. Secondly, That the Knowledge which God by his Prophets requir'd of all Men in general, and which every Man is oblig'd to have, is nothing elſe but the Knowledge of his Divine Juſtice

and Love, both which particulars are evidently prov'd out of the Scripture it ſelf, *Exod. chap. 6. v. 3.* God for an evidence of his particular favour to *Moſes*, ſaith, *I am the Lord, I appear'd unto* Abraham, *unto* Iſaac, *and unto* Jacob, *by the name of God Almighty, but by my name* Jehovah, *was I not known to them*; for the better underſtanding of this Text, we are to obſerve, that *Elſadai* ſignifies in Hebrew, God alſufficient, becauſe he giveth to every Man that which is ſufficient for him; and tho' *Sadai* of it ſelf, be often taken for God, yet the word *El*, is always to be underſtood; we are therefore to note, that in Scripture there is no other word to be found but *Jehovah*, that ſignifies God's abſolute Being without any relation to things created, and therefore the *Jews* will have this to be God's proper Name, and all others to be Appellatives; and indeed all the reſt of God's Names, whether they be Subſtantives or Adjectives, are but Attributes given to God, as he is conſider'd under a relation to his Creatures, or is made manifeſt by them: The word *El*, or by adding to it the Paragogical Letter *He*, *Eloha* ſignifies nothing elſe but Powerful, which is a title of Dignity or Excellency, as when we ſtile *Paul* an *Apoſtle*: Other Vertues of his Power, are expreſt by ſaying *the great God, God to be feared,*

feared, the juſt, merciful God, &c. or to expreſs them all at once, the plural number of this word *El* is often uſed in a ſingular ſignification. Seeing then God ſaid to *Moſes* he was not known to the Patriarchs by the Name of *Jehovah*, it follows, they knew no Name or Attribute of God that expreſs'd his abſolute Eſſence and Nature, but only his Works and his Promiſes, (that is) his Power as it was manifeſted by things viſible; and this God ſaid to *Moſes*, not to accuſe the Patriarchs of Unbelief, but to magnify and commend their Faith and readineſs to believe; by which, tho' they had not ſo great a knowledge of God as *Moſes* had, yet they firmly rely'd on his Promiſes; not like *Moſes*, who tho' he had ſublimer Notions of God, doubted his Divine Promiſes, and told God, that inſtead of the Deliverance he had promiſed, he had brought the Children of *Iſrael* into a worſe condition. If then God told *Moſes*, that the Patriarchs knew not that ſingular and proper Name of God, to commend their Faith and ſimplicity of Heart, and to put *Moſes* in mind of the particular Favour and Grace God had ſhewed him; it clearly proves my firſt Poſition; which is, That Men are not obliged by any expreſs Command to know God's Attributes, it being a peculiar gift granted only to ſome Be-

vers, which I need not prove by Scripture, ſince it is evident beyond all diſpute, that every Man hath not an equal ſhare of Divine Knowledge; and that a Man is no more able by a Command to become Wiſe, than 'tis in his own power to be, or live: Men, Women and Children may all, as they are commanded, obey, but never could a Command make any Man wiſe. If any Man ſay there is no need of underſtanding God's Attributes, but only of ſimply believing them, without any demonſtration, he talks idly; for inviſible things, which are the objects only of the Mind, can only be ſeen by Demonſtrations, (that is) firm convincing Arguments. and therefore what a Man only and barely hears of things inviſible, never affects the Underſtanding, nor declares a Man's meaning any more, than do the words of a Parrot, or ſome artificial Engin, that ſpeak without Underſtanding or Senſe. But before I proceed further, I ought to give an account why 'tis often ſaid in *Geneſis*, that the Patriarchs preached in the Name of *Jehovah*, which ſeems expreſly to contradict what I have ſaid. This is eaſily anſwer'd, if we conſider what hath been ſaid in the eighth Chapter, where we have proved, that the Writer of the *Pentateuch* did not call things and places by thoſe very names which they

they had at the time of which the Writer ſpeaketh, but by the names which they were known by, in the Writers own time; therefore when 'tis ſaid in *Geneſis*, that God was preached to the Patriarchs by the Name of *Jehovah*, it is not becauſe God was known to them by that Name, but becauſe to that Name of God, the *Jews* pay'd the higheſt Reverence and Veneration when *Geneſis* was written: and this muſt neceſſarily be a true and clear Anſwer, becauſe it is expreſly ſaid in the forecited text of *Exodus*, that God was not known to the Patriarchs by his Name *Jehovah*; and becauſe alſo in *Exod. chap.* 3. *v.* 13. *Moſes* deſired to know God's Name, which muſt have been known to him, had it been known to the Patriarchs before him. It muſt therefore be concluded, that the faithful Patriarchs were ignorant of this Name of God, and that the Knowledge of God is a Gift not a Command. It is now time to paſs on to the proof of the ſecond Particular, That God required from Men by his Prophets, no other Knowledge of himſelf, than the Knowledge of his Divine Juſtice and Love; (that is) thoſe Attributes which Men in a right courſe of living, may in ſome meaſure and degree imitate; which the Prophet *Jeremy* in expreſs words declares;

declares; for *chap.* 20. *v.* 15, 16. ſpeaking of King *Joſiah*, he ſaith, *Did not thy Father eat and drink, and do Judgment and Juſtice, and then it was well with him; he judged the cauſe of the poor and the needy, then it was well with him; is not this to know me, ſaith the Lord?* Nor are thoſe words leſs clear, *chap.* 9. *v.* 24. *Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciſe loving kindneſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth, for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.* We have a further proof, *Exod. chap.* 34. *v.* 6. where *Moſes* deſiring to ſee and know God, God revealeth no other Attributes to him, but ſuch as declare his Divine Juſtice and Love. Laſtly, How expreſs in the point are the words of St. *John* in the fourth Chapter of his firſt Epiſtle; becauſe no Man ever ſaw God, he maketh God known only by Love; and concludes, that he knoweth God, and God dwelleth in him who hath Charity. We ſee then, that *Moſes*, *Jeremy*, and *John* comprize that Knowledge of God which every Man is bound to have, in that only wherein we ſay 'tis comprehended; namely, in believing, that God is ſuperlatively juſt and merciful, and the only pattern of a good life: The Scripture doth no where give any expreſs and poſitive definition of God, neither

neither doth it preſcribe any other Attributes to be imitated and believed by us, but thoſe we have named, nor are thoſe expreſly commended as Attributes; ſo that from all theſe things we conclude, that the intellectual Knowledge of God, which conſiders God as he is in his own Nature and Eſſence, which Nature no Man can by any certain courſe of life imitate or take for his pattern, doth not at all teach a Man how to live well, neither doth it concern a Man's Faith or revealed Religion: So that a Man may be infinitely miſtaken in it, and yet not offend God. Let us not wonder then, that God apply'd himſelf to the Imaginations and preconceived Opinions of the Prophets, and that faithful Believers had different Opinions of God, as by many Inſtances we have proved in the ſecond Chapter; nor let any Man wonder, that the Sacred Volumes do every where ſpeak ſo improperly of God, aſcribing to him Hands, Feet, Eyes, Ears, Mind, Local Motion, yea, Paſſions of the Mind, ſaying, he is Jealous, Merciful, *&c.* and ſometimes ſet him out as a Judge ſitting in Heaven on a Regal Throne, and *Chriſt* at his Right hand, all which is ſpoken according to the Capacity of the Vulgar, whom the Scripture intended to make Obedient, but not Learned. Of theſe things, whatever ordinary

nary profeſt Divines, have by Reaſon and Natural Light diſcovered to be diſagreeable to the Divine Nature, they will have Metaphorically Interpreted, but that which is above their Capacity muſt be taken Litterally. If all things of this kind we meet with in Scripture, muſt be taken and underſtood Metaphorically, then the Scripture was not written for the rude and ignorant common people, but for the Learned, and eſpecially for Philoſophers; and if it ſhould be ſin piouſly and in ſimplicity of Heart, to believe thoſe things of God, which the Sacred Volumes have in the Letter aſcribed to him, the Prophets conſidering the weakneſs of the common people's Underſtanding, ought to have been very wary and careful, what Phraſes and Expreſſions they uſed, and ſhould have clearly and plainly, which is no where done, declared thoſe Attributes of God which every Man is bound to believe: No Man ought to think, that Opinions conſidered abſolutely in themſelves, without reſpect to a Man's Works, have any Piety or Impiety in them, but a Man is ſaid to be Godly or Ungodly in his Faith, in reſpect of thoſe Opinions which incline him to Obedience, or thoſe that encourage him to Sin and Diſobedience; ſo that if a Man, tho' he rightly and truly believe, be ſtubborn and diſobe-

dient,

dient, his Faith is evil; and on the contrary, if a Man believe that which is falſe, and yet live well, his Faith is good; for the true knowledge of God, is not a Precept, but a Divine Gift, and God never required from Men, any other Knowledge, than that of his Divine Love and Juſtice, which Knowledge is neceſſary only to Obedience, not to Science.

CHAP. XIV.

What is Faith. Who are Believers. The fundamentals of Faith ſtated. Faith diſtinguiſh'd from Philoſophy or Reaſon.

TO underſtand truly what Faith is, 'tis very neceſſary to know, that the Scripture was fitted and accommodated not only to the Capacity of the Prophets, but alſo to the Underſtanding of the inconſtant mutable vulgar people of the *Jewiſh* Nation, of which no perſon can be ignorant, that will but a little conſider and obſerve the Scripture. He that will take all things which are promiſcuouſly ſet down in Scripture,

ture, to be that univerſal poſitive Doctrine, whereby God is to be known, can never rightly diſcern what was ſuited to the Capacity of the *Jews*, but not being able to diſtinguiſh between Divine Doctrine, and the common peoples Opinions, muſt take human Fictions and Fancies for Heavenly Inſtructions, and conſequently very much abuſe the Sacred Scriptures Authority. Who doth not plainly ſee, that this is the cauſe we have ſo many Sectaries, who maintain their different and contrary Opinions to be all Doctrines and Principles of Faith, which they confirm by many Scripture proofs, ſo that 'tis become a *Dutch* Proverb, *Geen Ketter ſonder letter*, there is no Sectary or Heretick but hath a Text of Scripture to maintain his Opinion. The Sacred Books of Scripture were not all written by one perſon, nor for the people of one Age, but by divers perſons of different diſpoſitions, and for the people of ſeveral Ages diſtant in time from one another, almoſt two thouſand years; by ſome computations many more. We do not charge theſe Sectaries with impiety, for applying the words of Scripture to their own Opinions, as heretofore they were ſuited to Vulgar Capacities, it being lawful for every one to apply Scripture to his own Opinions, if he find himſelf thereby more inclin'd to obey God in

in thoſe things which relate to Juſtice and Charity; but we blame the Sectaries for not allowing other Men the ſame liberty they themſelves take; they count all Men, be they never ſo honeſt and vertuous, who are not of their Opinions, the Enemies of God, and perſecute them as ſuch; but call thoſe who are of their Mind, God's Elect, be they never ſo very Knaves; which is the moſt pernicious wicked humour can poſſibly be in a Common-wealth. To make it clear then, how far in point of Faith, every Man may extend his liberty of thinking what he pleaſeth, and upon whom we are to look as Believers, tho' they differ in Opinion; I reſolve to ſhew in this Chapter what Faith is, to declare what are the fundamentals of Faith, and to diſtinguiſh Faith from Reaſon or Philoſophy, which is the chief deſign of the whole Treatiſe. To do theſe things in order, 'tis neceſſary to put you in mind again, what is the Scriptures principal intention, for that will ſhew us the right Rule of determining what is Faith. We have told you in the preceding Chapter, that the chief deſign of Scripture is to teach Men Obedience, which no Man can deny; for who doth not plainly ſee the Diſcipline of Obedience to be the main ſcope of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*? The only End of both is to make Men obey God with all their Heart.

Heart. I need not repeat what I have already told you, that *Moſes* did not endeavour to convince the *Iſraelites* with Reaſon, but to bind and oblige them by a Covenant, by Oaths and Benefits; he threatned thoſe that broke the Law with puniſhment, and encouraged the obſervers of it with Rewards; which were means not to increaſe Knowledge, but only to procure Obedience: The Doctrine of the Goſpel, contains nothing but plain ſimple Faith, namely, to believe God, and to reverence and worſhip him, or which is the ſame thing, to obey him. There is no need of demonſtrating a thing ſo evident, or of heaping up Texts of Scripture that commend Obedience, whereof there are many in both *Teſtaments*; what a Man is to do to obey God, the Scripture in many places declares; namely, that the whole Law conſiſts in loving our Neighbour; ſo that it muſt be granted, that he in the Judgment of the Law is obedient, who according to God's Command loveth his Neighbour as himſelf; and that he on the contrary, who hateth his Neighbour, or cares not for him, is rebellious and diſobedient. Laſtly, it muſt be confeſt, that the Scripture was written and publiſhed, not only for the Wiſe and Learned, but for all people in general of all times: Hence then muſt it follow, that we are not commanded by

by Scripture to believe any thing elſe, but what is abſolutely neceſſary to enable us to perform and obey this Commandment, ſo that this Precept is the only Rule of Catholick Faith, and by it only, all thoſe fundamental Doctrines of Faith, which every one is oblig'd to believe, ought to be defined and determined; which being clear and manifeſt, and that. from this Foundation only, all things ought to be rationally deduced and derived: Let any Man judge, whether the many Diſputes and Diſſentions ſprung up in the Church, could have any other cauſe than thoſe I mentioned in the beginning of the ſeventh Chapter, which force me here to ſhew from this Foundation I have laid, the manner and reaſon of ſtating and determining, what are the true Doctrines and Principles of Faith; for unleſs I do this, and make it good by ſure and certain Rules, I have indeed hitherto done very little, ſeeing otherwiſe every Man may introduce what he pleaſes, under pretence that 'tis a neceſſary means to Obedience; eſpecially, when any thing comes into queſtion concerning the Divine Attributes: To proceed orderly in making the thing clear and plain, I will begin with the definition of Faith, which according to the Foundation I have laid, ought to be thus defined. Faith, is to have ſuch Thoughts or Opinions of God, as

make a Man obey him; where ſuch thoughts are not, there is no Obedience, and where they are, Obedience neceſſarily follows ſuch Opinions; which definition is ſo clear, and evidently follows from what we have already demonſtrated, that it needs no explication: What follows from this definition I will briefly ſhew; firſt, That Faith of it ſelf without Obedience, is not able to ſave a Man, as *James* ſaith, *Chap.* 2. 17. *Faith without Works is dead*; which is the Subject of that whole Chapter. Secondly, That he who is truly obedient, muſt neceſſarily have Saving Faith; for where ever there is Obedience, there, as I have ſaid, muſt be Faith, which the ſame Apoſtle ſaith expreſly in the 18*th verſe* of the ſaid 2*d chap. Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works*; and *John* in his 1*ſt Epiſt. chap.* 4. *v.* 78. *Every one that loveth his Neighbour is born of God, and knoweth God, he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love*; from whence it likewiſe follows, that we can judge no Man to be a Believer, or an Unbeliever, but by his Works, (that is) if his Works be good, tho' in his Opinions he diſſent from other Believers, yet he is a Believer; and if his Works be evil, tho' in words he agree with others that believe, he is an Infidel; for where there is Obedience, there muſt neceſſarily be Faith, and Faith without

out Works is dead, which *John* in *chap.* 4. 13. expreſly declares, *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*, which Spirit is Love, for he ſaid juſt before, *God is Love*; and concludes from his own Principles, that he certainly hath the Spirit of God, who hath Love; and becauſe no Man ever ſaw God, he concludes, that no Man can have any ſenſe or knowledge of God, but only by Love; and that no Man can know any other Attribute of God but Love, by partaking of it; which Reaſons, if they do not abſolutely convince, yet they ſufficiently explain St. *John*'s meaning. What he ſaith in the 3*d* and 4*th verſes* of his 2*d chap.* in expreſs words fully proves what we maintain; *And hereby*, ſaith he, *do we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments; he that ſaith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*; hence it again follows, that they are Antichriſts, who perſecute honeſt and juſt Men, that differ from them in Opinion, and do not maintain their Doctrines; they that love Juſtice and Charity, are thereby only known to be Believers, and whoever perſecutes ſuch Believers is Antichriſt. Laſtly, it follows, that Faith doth not require Opinions that are in themſelves true, but ſuch only as are pious, and incline a Man's Heart to Obedience: There are many things that have not the leaſt ſhadow of

ruth in them, which a Man may believe, and yet be ignorant that they are falſe, otherwiſe he would neceſſarily be diſobedient. How cometh it to paſs, that he who is a lover of Juſtice, and ſtudies to obey God, reverenceth that as Divine, which he knows is no way agreeable to the Divine Nature? Men may err in the ſimplicity of their Hearts, and the Scripture, as I have already ſaid, condemns ſtubbornneſs not ignorance, which follows from the very definition I have given of Faith; every part thereof being derived from the general Foundation before mentioned, and from the main end and deſign of Scripture; ſo that Faith doth not require from Men, Opinions abſolutely true in themſelves, but ſuch only as are neceſſary to Obedience, and to confirm a Man in love towards his Neighbour; by which Love, to uſe St. *John*'s expreſſion, every Man is in God, and God in him. Seeing then every Man's Faith in reſpect of Obedience or Diſobedience, and not in reſpect of truth or falſhood, is to be eſteemed good or evil; and ſeeing Mens diſpoſitions are ſo various, that none agree in all things, but are ſo diverſly ſway'd by Opinion, that what moves this Man to Devotion, begets in another Laughter and Contempt; it follows, that to Univerſal Faith, only thoſe Doctrines are neceſſary, concerning which, amongſt honeſt Men there can be no diſpute; thoſe things

things that are of ſuch a nature, that one Man may account them Religious, and another Irreligious, are to be judged only by Works; to Catholick Faith then thoſe Doctrines only belong, which beget in a Man Obedience toward God, and of which, if a Man be ignorant, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould obey him; in other things, every Man according to the knowledge he hath of himſelf, may, to eſtabliſh himſelf in the love of Juſtice, think what to him ſeemeth beſt, which will take away all occaſions of Diſpute and Controverſie in the Church. Now I will not fear to name thoſe Doctrines of Univerſal Faith, or thoſe Fundamentals of Scripture that (by what I have proved in theſe two laſt Chapters) tend all to this; that there is a Supreme Being that loveth Juſtice and Charity, to whom all that will be ſaved, muſt be obedient, and worſhip him, in the exerciſe of Juſtice and love towards their Neighbour, and from hence theſe ſeveral Poſitions clearly and eaſily follow. Firſt, That there is a God, or Supreme Being, who is moſt juſt and merciful, by whoſe Example every Man ought to regulate his life; he that knoweth not, or doth not believe that God is, cannot obey him, or acknowledge him to be his Judge. Secondly, That this God is one, which Opinion is abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man adore, admire, and love God,

for Devotion, Admiration, and Love, are cauſed by that excellency which is in one above all others. Thirdly, That he is every where preſent, or that all things are known to him, for if any thing were hidden from him, or if Man did not think that he ſeeth all things, we might doubt of his Equity and Juſtice, whereby he governeth all things. Fourthly, That he hath Supreme Power and Dominion over all things, that he doth nothing by compulſion, but of his own good Will and Pleaſure; all are bound to obey him, and he no body. Fifthly, That the worſhip of God, and obedience to him, conſiſts only in Juſtice and Charity towards our Neighbours. Sixthly, that only they who obey God by ſuch a courſe of life will be ſaved, and others who live Slaves to their Luſts and Pleaſures will be condemned. If Men did not firmly believe this, there would be no reaſon why a Man ſhould rather obey God than his own deſires and pleaſures. Seventhly and laſtly, God pardoneth the ſins of thoſe that repent; there is no Man living without ſin, and therefore if this were not an Article of Faith, all would deſpair of Salvation, and there would be no reaſon to believe God merciful; but he who ſtedfaſtly believes, that God, through Grace and Mercy, whereby he ordereth all things, pardoneth Men's offences, and is thereby more

inflamed

flamed with love towards God, he knoweth *Chriſt* according to the Spirit, and *Chriſt* is in him. Every one of theſe things is neceſſary to be known, that all Men without exception may obey God, according to the preſcript of the Law which we have already explained. If you take away any of the aforeſaid Poſitions or Doctrines, there can be no Obedience; but what God, or what this exemplar of living well is? Whether he be Fire, a Spirit, Light, Cogitation, *&c.* it concerns not our Faith, neither in what notion or reſpect he is an example for us to live by. Whether it be becauſe he hath a juſt and merciful Mind, or becauſe all things ſubſiſt and act by him, and conſequently, we by and through him underſtand what is juſt and good; it matters not what every Man thinks or concludes of theſe things, neither is Faith concerned, whether a Man believe that God is, in reſpect of his Power, Omnipreſent; or whether he govern all things by the freedom or neceſſity of his nature; whether he preſcribe Laws as a Prince, or teach Eternal Verities; whether Men obey God as free agents, becauſe they have freedom of Will, or becauſe they are neceſſitated by God's Decrees? Whether the reward of good Men, and the puniſhment of evil, be natural or ſupernatural? Faith is not concerned how a Man underſtands theſe things, ſo long

as he makes no concluſions whereby he may take a liberty of ſinning, or leſſen his Obedience to God: Of theſe Doctrines of Faith a Man may make ſuch an interpretation, as is moſt likely to make him believe, and obey God chearfully without any reluctancy; for as we have already ſhewn, Faith was heretofore revealed and written, according to the Capacity and Opinions of the Prophets and People of that time, ſo that now alſo, every Man is bound to apply his Faith to his own Reaſon, in ſuch a manner as may make him without the leaſt doubting or reluctancy believe; for as we have proved, Faith rather requires Piety than Verity, and as Faith cannot be pious and ſaving, without Obedience, ſo nothing but Obedience makes a Man a faithful Believer; his Faith is not beſt, who can give the beſt reaſons for it, but he that hath done the moſt and greateſt works of Juſtice and Charity. A Doctrine which muſt in all Mens Judgments be very wholſome and neceſſary in all Commonwealths, for taking away the cauſes of much wickedneſs and many troubles. Before I go further, by what hath been ſaid, the Objections may be eaſily anſwered, which were mentioned in the firſt Chapter, where I treated of God's ſpeaking to the *Iſraelites* from *Mount Sinai*; for tho' that Voice which the *Iſraelites* heard, could not give that people

ple any Philoſophical or Mathematical certainty of God's Exiſtence, yet it was ſufficient to make them admire God, under that knowledge they before had of him, and incite them to Obedience towards him, which was all that God purpoſed and deſigned in that ſpectacle; it was not God's intention at that time to teach them the true and real Attributes of his Eſſence, (becauſe he then revealed none to them) but to break and ſubdue their rebellious and ſtubborn humor, and draw them to Obedience; and therefore he did not ſet upon them with Arguments and Reaſon, but with Tempeſt, Noiſe, Thunder and Lightning, as is recorded, *Exod.* 20. 20.

I am now to prove, that between Faith or Theology, and Philoſophy, there is no commerce or affinity; which no Man can deny, who knows how much the Foundation and End of theſe two faculties differ; for the end and deſign of Philoſophy, is Verity; and the intention and end of Faith, is nothing but Obedience and Piety. The fundadamentals of Philoſophy, are common notions which are to be drawn only from Nature it ſelf, but the principles and fundamentals of Faith, are to be derived from Scripture-Hiſtory, Scripture-Language, from the Scripture it ſelf, and from Revelation; as we have ſhewn in the *7th* Chapter: Faith therefore allows every Man ſuch a freedom

and

and liberty of Reaſoning or Philoſophizing, that he may think what he will of any thing, provided he do nothing that is wicked, and condemns only thoſe for Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, who broach Doctrines that are the cauſes of diſobedience, hatred, contention, and wrath; eſteeming only ſuch to be Believers, who uſe their utmoſt endeavours to perſwade and practiſe Juſtice and Charity. Laſtly, Becauſe what I have ſaid in this and the former Chapter, was what I chiefly intended in the whole Treatiſe; I earneſtly requeſt the Reader, before I proceed further, that he will again and again carefully read, and ſeriouſly conſider, the Contents of theſe two Chapters, and that he will have Charity enough to believe, that I have written nothing with deſign to introduce new Doctrines; but only to rectify what is amiſs, which I hope e're long to ſee done.

CHAP. XV.

Theology or Divinity is no Handmaid to Reaſon, nor Reaſon to Divinity: Why we believe the Authority of the Holy Scripture.

AMongſt thoſe that know not how to diſtinguiſh and divide Philoſophy from Theology, there is very great diſpute, whether

ther the Scripture ought to be ſubſervient to Reaſon, or Reaſon to Scripture, (that is) whether we are to judge of the Senſe of Scripture by Reaſon; or whether Reaſon ought to ſubmit to Scripture? The *Scepticks*, who deny the certainty of Reaſon, maintain one of theſe Opinions, and the *Dogmatiſts*, who judge all things by Reaſon, the other; but both, as appears by what I have ſaid, are extremely miſtaken; for whoever follows either of the two Opinions, muſt neceſſarily deprave either Reaſon or Scripture. We have ſhewn that the Scripture doth teach us no Philoſophy, but only Piety, and all things contained in it, are fitted to the Capacity and Opinions of vulgar people: Whoever then goes about to apply it to Philoſophy, muſt father upon the Prophets, many things whereof they did never ſo much as dream, and interpret that to be their meaning which never was. He, on the other ſide, who makes Reaſon or Philoſophy a Handmaid to Divinity, will be neceſſitated to let the miſtaken Opinions of old times paſs for Divine Truths; poſſeſſing and blinding his Underſtanding with Error and Prejudice, and both run mad together without Reaſon. The firſt among the *Phariſees*, who openly declared, that Scripture was to be accommodated to Reaſon, was *Maimonides*, (whoſe Opinion we have hinted and refuted in the *7th* Chapter) but tho' this Author were of great Authority among

among the *Phariſees*, yet the greateſt part of that Sect did not agree with him in this point, but generally maintained the Opinion of *Rabbi Jehuda Alpakhar*, who endeavouring to avoid the Error of *Maimonides*, fell into the clean contrary Opinion, holding that Reaſon ought to be a Handmaid to Scripture, and wholly ſubjected to it; and would have nothing in Scripture metaphorically interpreted, becauſe the literal ſenſe was contrary and repugnant to Reaſon, but becauſe it was ſo to the Scripture it ſelf, (that is) to the poſitive Doctrines of Scripture, and laid it down for a general rule, that whatever the Scripture did in plain and expreſs words affirm and teach, that upon the account of its Authority was to be admitted for Truth, if no other Poſition were found in the *Bible*, which did only conſequentially, but not directly contradict it; for there are ſome Scripture expreſſions, which ſeem to imply contradiction to what hath been poſitively and expreſly declared, and therefore thoſe places only are to be metaphorically taken: (For example) *Deut.*6.4. it is plainly and poſitively declared, That there is but one God, or that God is but one; but there are many places where God ſpeaking of himſelf, and the Prophets of God ſpeak in the plural number, which manner of ſpeaking ſuppoſeth and implies more God's than one, tho' that doth not clearly and directly

appear

appear to be the intention of the words: All thoſe places therefore are to be metaphorically interpreted, not becauſe it is repugnant to Reaſon, that there ſhould be more Gods than one, but becauſe the Scripture it ſelf directly declares that there is but only one. So likewiſe, becauſe the Scripture, *Deut.* 4. 15. doth in the *Rabbi*'s Opinion directly declare, that God is Incorporeal, therefore upon the Authority only of this Text, and not upon any account of Reaſon, we are bound to believe God hath no Body, and conſequently, all places of Scripture are to be metaphorically taken, which aſcribe to God Hands, Feet, or which ſeem to ſuppoſe God Corporeal: This was the Opinion of this Author, whom I commend for explaining Scripture by Scripture, but I wonder that a rational Man ſhould endeavour to deſtroy Reaſon: It is very true, that Scripture ought to be expounded by Scripture, ſo long as there is doubt of the ſenſe of the words, or of the meaning of the Prophets; but when we have found out the true ſenſe, 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to make uſe of our Reaſon and Judgment, to gain our aſſent and conſent to it; for if we muſt ſubmit to Scripture, tho' our Reaſon be not at all convinced by it, muſt we ſubmit with Reaſon, or like blind Men without any Reaſon at all? if we ſubmit without Reaſon, we do it fooliſhly

liſhly without Judgment; if we ſubmit with Reaſon, then 'tis by the command and dictates of Reaſon, that we believe and embrace the Scripture, which we would not do, were it contrary to Reaſon. Who can in his Mind believe, or conſent to any thing which his Reaſon flatly oppoſeth? Denying a thing with a Man's Heart, is nothing elſe but the gainſaying and diſſent of a Man's Reaſon. I extreamly wonder ſome Men ſhould ſubject that excellent gift and Divine Light, Reaſon, to Dead Letters, which humane Malice may corrupt and miſ-interpret, and yet account it no offence to ſpeak unworthily againſt Reaſon and the Mind of Man, whereon God hath engraven his Word, ſaying, Our Reaſon is blinded and loſt, but in the mean time declare, 'tis abominable wickedneſs to think any ſuch thing of the Letter, which they Idolize for the Word of God; they account it great Piety in a Man, not to truſt to his own Judgment and Reaſon, but great wickedneſs to doubt their fidelity, who communicated to us the Sacred Volumes. Certainly ſuch Men's Folly exceeds their Piety: What troubles them? What is it they fear? Cannot Religion and Faith be defended unleſs Men be profeſſedly ignorant, and bid Reaſon farewell? they that think ſo, do rather fear than believe Scripture. God forbid that Religion ſhould be a

Servant

Servant to Reaſon, or Reaſon to Religion, both may with great Peace and Concord preſerve their own proper Dominion, which I will preſently prove, after I have a little examined the Tenet and Opinion of our *Rabbin Alpakhar*; he, as I have ſaid, would have us receive every thing for truth which the Scripture affirms, and reject every thing as falſe which the Scripture denies; and maintains, that the Scripture doth no where in expreſs words affirm or deny, any thing contrary to what in another place it hath poſitively affirmed or denied; both which are very bold and raſh Poſitions. I will not preſs him with what perhaps he never took notice of, that the Scripture contains ſeveral Books, that it was written by ſeveral Authors, in ſeveral Ages, for the uſe of divers people; and ſeeing upon his own Authority only, he maintains, what neither Reaſon or Scripture ever ſaid, he ought to ſhew, that all thoſe places of Scripture, which do but by conſequence contradict others, may from the nature of the Language, and in reſpect of the place, conveniently bear a metaphorical interpretation; and he ought likewiſe to prove, That the Scripture is derived down to us, without any corruption or adulteration. To come cloſe to the buſineſs, I ask him concerning his firſt Poſition, Whether we are bound to believe eve-

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ry thing to be true which the Scripture affirms; and reject every thing as falſe which it denies, tho' both be contrary to our Reaſon? If he anſwer that nothing can be found in Scripture contrary to Reaſon, I preſs him with this inſtance. In the *Decalogue*, *Exod.* 34. 14. *Deut.* 4. 24. and in other places, it is ſaid, That *God is Jealous*; but that ſuch a paſſion as Jealouſie ſhould be in God is contrary to Reaſon: Now if there be other places in Scripture which ſuppoſe God not to be Jealous, they muſt be metaphorically interpreted, that they may not ſeem to ſuppoſe any ſuch thing. The Scripture expreſly ſaith, That God came down upon *Mount Sinai*, *Exod.* 19. 20. and aſcribes to him other local motions, no where expreſly declaring, that God is not moved; ſo that all Men ought to believe it to be truth, and therefore that which *Solomon* ſaith of God in 1 *Kings* 8. 27. *That he cannot be comprehended, or contained in any place*, tho' it do not expreſly but only conſequentially declare, that God is not moved, ought to be in like manner metaphorically underſtood: The Heavens alſo muſt be taken for God's Throne and Habitation, becauſe the Scripture declares poſitively they are. Many things of this kind, are ſaid in Scripture, conſonant to the Opinions of the Prophets and People, which Reaſon and Philoſophy, but not

Scripture

Scripture ſay are falſe, all which according to the *Rabbi's* Opinion, who in ſuch caſes will allow no conſulting with Reaſon, muſt paſs for Truths. He affirms that which is not true, in ſaying that no one place of Scripture expreſly and directly contradicts another, but only by conſequence; for *Moſes*, *Deut.* 4. 24. expreſly declares, That *God is a conſuming fire*, and directly denies that God is like any viſible thing, *Deut.* 4. 12. Now if the *Rabbi* will have this latter Text, not directly, but only by conſequence to deny that God is Fire, and therefore muſt be ſo interpreted that it may not ſeem to deny it; let him have his Will, and let us grant, that God is Fire; or rather, not to be as mad as he, we will let this paſs, and make uſe of another example: *Samuel* directly denies, that God ever repents of his Decrees, (1 *Sam.* 15. 29.) but *Jeremy* on the contrary affirms, (*Chap.* 18. *v.* 8, 10.) That God doth ſometimes repent, both of the good and of the evil that he purpoſed and decreed. Do not theſe two Texts directly oppoſe one another? Which of theſe two muſt be metaphorically interpreted? both the Opinions are general, and contrary to each other; what one directly affirms, the other poſitively denies, ſo that the *Rabbi*, by his own Rule, is bound to believe one and the ſame thing to be true and falſe: but

what matter is it, tho' one place do not directly, but only by conſequence contradict another? If the conſequence be clear, and the nature and circumſtance of the place will admit of no Metaphorical Explication; of which many are to be found in the *Bible*, we have ſpoke to them in the ſecond Chapter, where we have ſhewn, that ſeveral Prophets had different Opinions, and particularly of thoſe contradictions which I in the *9th* and *10th* Chapter have made appear to be in ſeveral of the Scripture Hiſtories; they need not be repeated, what I have ſaid being ſufficient to confute the Abſurdities and Falſities which muſt neceſſarily follow from the *Rabbi's* Rule, and to ſhew how unadviſedly and groſly the Author is miſtaken. The different Opinions of both *Rabbies* being confuted, I do again poſitively declare, That Divinity or Theology ought not to be a Servant to Reaſon, nor Reaſon to Theology, but both ought to maintain their own Dominion; Reaſon ought to rule in things which relate to Wiſdom and Truth, and Theology in matters which concern our Piety and Obedience: The power of Reaſon doth not ſo far extend it ſelf, as to determin, that Men only by Obedience, without the true knowledge of things may be bleſſed and happy, but Theology dictates nothing elſe, and commands nothing but Obedience, not

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intending or being able to do any thing againſt Reaſon, as we have ſhewed in the preceding Chapter: Theology determins Doctrines of Faith, no further than is neceſſary to Obedience, but how thoſe Doctrines are preciſely in reſpect of Verity to be underſtood, it leaves Reaſon to reſolve, which is the light of our Mind, and without which we ſee nothing but Dreams and Fancies. But here by Theology, I mean only Revelation, ſo far as it declares the ſcope and end to which the Scripture aims, (namely, the reaſon and manner of living obediently, or the Doctrines of Faith and Piety.) This is that which is properly the word of God, and doth not conſiſt in a certain number of Books, as we have ſhewed in the 12*th* Chapter: Theology taken in this ſenſe, if we conſider its Precepts and Inſtructions, perfectly agrees with Reaſon; and if we conſider its End and Deſign, in nothing contradicts it; and therefore univerſally concerns all mankind. As for the whole Scripture in general, the ſenſe thereof, as we have ſhewed in the 7*th*. Chapter, is to be determined by Scripture Hiſtory, and not by the Hiſtory of Nature, which is the Foundation and proper Subject of Philoſophy: Nor ought we to be troubled or concerned, if after we have found out the true ſenſe of the Scripture, the Scripture in ſome places ſeem repugnant to Reaſon; for

whatever of that kind we meet with in the *Bible*, and of which Men may without any breach of Charity be ignorant, doth not at all concern Theology, or the Word of God; and conſequently, of ſuch things, a Man may without ſin think what he pleaſeth, and therefore we poſitively conclude, that Reaſon is not to be accommodated to Scripture, nor Scripture to Reaſon. But ſeeing the fundamental point in Divinity, of Mens being ſaved only by Obedience, cannot be demonſtrated by Reaſon to be true or falſe; it may by way of Objection be then asked, Why then do we believe it? If we do it blindly without Reaſon, we act like Fools without Judgment; if on the other ſide, we ſay this Fundamental Tenet may be proved by Reaſon, then Divinity is a part of Philoſophy, and cannot be ſever'd from it. To this I anſwer, That I do clearly confeſs, this Fundamental Doctrine of Theology cannot be made out by Natural Reaſon, at leaſt, no Man that I know hath ever done it; therefore Revelation was abſolutely neceſſary in the caſe, but yet we may make uſe of our Judgment and Reaſon, that what hath been revealed may with a moral certainty be believed by us; I ſay with moral certainty, for it is not to be expected, that we can have any greater aſſurance than the Prophets themſelves had, to whom the Revelation was firſt made,

made, and who had no more than a moral certainty, as we have ſhewed in the ſecond Chapter of this Treatiſe. They therefore are in a very great error, who endeavour to prove the Authority of Scripture by Mathematical Demonſtration, for the Authority of the *Bible* depends upon the Authority of the Prophets, and conſequently, can be proved by no ſtronger argument, than the Prophets made uſe of to perſwade the people of theirs: Our certainty of the Scriptures Authority, can be grounded upon no other Foundation, than that whereon the Prophets founded their Certainty and Authority; and we have already ſhewn the certainty of the Prophets, conſiſted in three particulars. Firſt, In a clear and lively imagination. Secondly, In a Sign. Thirdly and principally, in a Mind inclined and devoted to Juſtice and Vertue: nor could they give any other evidences of their Authority, either to the people to whom they ſpake in their own perſons by word of mouth; nor can any other be given to us, to whom they ſpeak by their Writings; the lively imagination of the Prophets, was an Argument only to themſelves, and therefore all our aſſurance concerning Revelation, doth and muſt conſiſt only in the other two particulars, namely, in a Sign, and in the Doctrine. The eighteenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy* commands the people to

obey that Prophet, who in the name of the Lord gave them a true Sign, but if he propheſied any thing that was falſe, tho' it were in the Name of the Lord, he was to be put to death; as he was who endeavoured to ſeduce them from the true Religion, tho' he confirm'd his Propheſie with Signs and Miracles; as appears in the 13*th* Chapter of *Deuteronomy*; whence it follows, that a true Prophet was to be known from a falſe, by his Doctrine and by a Miracle both together, for ſuch a one only *Moſes* declareth to be a true Prophet, and commanded the people to believe him, without any fear of being deceived: But he declared thoſe to be falſe Prophets, and guilty of Death, who foretold any thing that was falſe; tho' it were in the Name of God; or he that preached falſe Gods, tho' he wrought true Miracles: We then are oblig'd to believe the Scripture, (that is) the Prophets, upon account only of their Doctrine confirm'd by Signs; becauſe we ſee the Prophets above all things commend Juſtice and Charity, and intended nothing elſe; becauſe with a ſincere Mind without any guile or deceit, they declared that Men by Faith and Obedience ſhould be made happy, and confirm'd this their Doctrines with Signs. We therefore conclude and perſwade our ſelves, that when they propheſied, they did neither dote or

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ſpeak unadviſedly; in which Opinion we are the more confirm'd, when we conſider, that all their Moral Doctrines, did perfectly agree with Reaſon; for it is very obſervable, that the Word of God in the Prophets, is exactly conſonant to the Word of God within us; ſo that I ſay again, we are as much aſſured of theſe things by the Scripture, as the *Jews* were by the Prophets preaching to them *viva voce*; for we have proved in the end of the ſecond Chapter, that the Scripture as to its Doctrine and the principal Hiſtories thereof, is derived down to us uncorrupted, and therefore this Fundamental Doctrine of Scripture and Theology, ought with good reaſon to be embraced by us, tho' it cannot be proved by Mathematical Demonſtration. It is very great folly not to believe a thing which hath been confirmed by ſo many Teſtimonies of the Prophets, and which is ſo great a comfort to thoſe who have but ordinary portions of Reaſon, which is ſo beneficial to the publick, and which may without any danger or loſs be believed: We can give no reaſon for our doubting or unbelief, but our not having Mathematical Demonſtration to prove it; as if nothing could contribute to living vertuouſly and prudently, but that which is abſolutely and apparently true, in which there is not the leaſt ſhadow or doubt, and as if

there were nothing of chance and uncertainty in our Actions: I confeſs, they who think Philoſophy and Divinity contradictory one to another, and therefore conclude one of them ought to be dethroned and ſubjected to the other, do very well to build Divinity upon a ſure Foundation, and endeavour by Infallible Demonſtration to ſupport it; yet I cannot but condemn thoſe that make uſe of Reaſon to deſtroy Reaſon, and by Certain Reaſon endeavour to prove there is no certainty in Reaſon; while they are demonſtrating the Verity and Authority of Theology, and ſtrive to deprive Reaſon of its power; they ſubject Theology to the Empire of Reaſon, and allow it no other ſplendor, than what it borrows from Natural Light: If they boaſt of relying upon the Internal Teſtimony of the Holy Spirit, and ſay they make uſe of Reaſon only to convert Infidels, we ought not to believe them, becauſe 'tis evident, that the Holy Spirit beareth witneſs to nothing but good Works, which *Paul*, *Galath.* 5. 22. therefore calls the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is nothing elſe, but that Tranquility of Mind, and Peace of Conſcience, which ariſeth in us from doing good. But of the truth and certainty of things meerly ſpeculative, no other Spirit but Reaſon beareth witneſs, Reaſon only can challenge the power of judging what is true,

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they that pretend to any other Spirit, whereby to make themſelves certain what is true; maintain that which is falſe, and are either prejudiced with their own Paſſions and Affections, or elſe fearing to be baffled and made ridiculous by Philoſophers and Men of Reaſon, fly for Shelter and Sanctuary to that which is Sacred; but what Altar can protect him, who offends the Sacred Majeſty of Reaſon? I need ſay no more to ſuch Men, having I hope ſufficiently proved, why Theology ought to be diſtinguiſh'd from Philoſophy, and in what each of them chiefly conſiſts; that neither of them ought to be a Servant to the other, and that both of them may exerciſe their own peculiar power, without offending one another: Laſtly, I have ſhew'd where there was occaſion, what Abſurdities, Miſchiefs and Inconveniencies follow from Men's confounding theſe two faculties, not knowing how exactly to diſtinguiſh and divide one from the other. Before I proceed, I deſire notice may be taken, that I declare the benefit and neceſſity of Sacred Scripture; (that is) Revelation, to be exceeding great, for ſeeing we cannot by Natural Light, perceive that Simple Obedience is the way to Salvation, and that God's ſpecial Grace and Favour hath by Revelation only, and not by Reaſon, made it known unto us; the

the Scripture muſt certainly be a great help and conſolation to all mankind; becauſe tho' every Man may obey, yet in reſpect of the whole, there are very few, who by the dictates and conduct of Reaſon live vertuouſly, ſo that were it not for the Teſtimony of Scripture, we might doubt of moſt Men's Salvation.

CHAP. XVI.

Of founding Commonwealths. Of every Man's Natural and Civil Right. Of the Right of Supreme Powers.

HItherto I have carefully endeavoured, to diſtinguiſh and divide Philoſophy from Theology, and have ſhewed the liberty of reaſoning which Theology allows everyMan; it is now time to enquire, how far this liberty of thinking and ſpeaking a Man's Thoughts, may in the beſt governed Commonwealths extend it ſelf. And that we may orderly examin the matter, we will diſcourſe of the Foundations of Commonwealths, and in the firſt place, of every Man's Natural Right, without any relation either to Government or Religion.

By the Law and Inſtitution of Nature, I mean nothing elſe, but thoſe Rules of Nature,

ture, according to which every individual Being, is naturally appointed and ordained, in ſuch a certain manner to be, and to act; (for Example) Fiſhes are by Nature ordained to ſwim, and the greater to eat the leſs; therefore by the Sovereign Right or Law of Nature, they poſſeſs and enjoy the Water, and the greater eat the leſs: For it is certain, that Nature conſidered abſolutely hath Sovereign Right to all things within its own power; (that is) the Right of Nature may extend it ſelf, ſo far as its Power can extend; for the Power of Nature, is the Power of God, who hath Sovereign Right to all things. But becauſe the univerſal Power of the whole frame of Nature, is nothing elſe but the Power of every individual Being joyned together; it follows, that every individual Being hath Sovereign Right to all things within the compaſs of its Power; or the Right of every Individual may extend it ſelf, ſo far as its determinate Power will reach: And becauſe the ſupremeſt Law of Nature is, that every thing ſhould endeavour as far as it is able, to preſerve it ſelf in that ſtate wherein it is, without having regard to any thing elſe but it ſelf; it follows, that every individual Being, hath Sovereign Right to this ſelf-preſervation; (that is) to continue its exiſtence, and to operate as it was naturally ordained: And in this reſpect there

there is no difference between Men and other Individual Beings in Nature, nor between Men endued with Reaſon, and others who know not the uſe of it, nor between Fools and Men in their right Senſes; for what every thing doth by, and according to the Laws of its own Nature, that it hath in the higheſt degree right to do; becauſe it acteth as it was by Nature appointed, and can do nothing otherwiſe; amongſt Men therefore conſidered living only under the Power of Nature, he that knows not what Reaſon is, as well as he who knows not what Vertue is, hath as much right to live according to the Laws of his Appetite, as he who directeth his life by the Rules of Reaſon: My meaning is, That as a wiſe Man hath right to all things which Reaſon dictates, or that lives according to the Laws and Rules of Reaſon; ſo likewiſe an ignorant or meer ſenſual Man, hath right to all things, whereto his Appetite leads him, or that liveth according to the Law of his Appetite, which is the ſame thing that *Paul* declares, who acknowledgeth that before the Law (that is) ſo long as Men were conſidered living in the State and under the Power of Nature, there was no ſin.

The Natural Right therefore of every Man, is determin'd not by Reaſon, but by Appetite and Power, for all Men are not naturally

naturally ordain'd, to act and operate according to the Rules and Laws of Reaſon; but on the contrary, all Men are born actually ignorant of all things, and before they can know the right of living, and acquire the habit of Vertue, a great part of their Age, tho' they be well educated, is ſpent and paſſeth away; yet in the mean time they are bound to live, and as much as in themſelves lies, to preſerve themſelves by the impulſe of their Appetite, ſeeing Nature hath given them nothing elſe wherewith to do it, and hath denied the actual uſe of right Reaſon; ſo that they are no more obliged to live by the Rules of it, than a Cat is bound to live like a Lion; whatſoever then every Man, as he is conſidered under the Power and Laws of Nature, ſhall either by the dictates of Right Reaſon, or by the impulſe of his Appetite, think convenient and profitable for him; that by the Law of Nature is lawful for him to deſire, and either by force, deceit, intreaties, or any other way he thinks moſt eaſie to get it, and may conſequently take any one for an Enemy, that endeavours to hinder him from having his deſires.

From whence it follows, that the Law and Inſtitution of Nature, under which all Men are born, and for the moſt part live; prohibits nothing but what no body deſires, or is in no bodies power, nor doth it forbid, Contention,

tention, Hatred, Wrath, Deceit, or any thing abſolutely to which a Man's Appetite inclines him: Nor is this any wonder, for Nature is not bounded and ſhut up within the Laws only of Human Reaſon, which deſigns and intends nothing but the real good and preſervation of mankind, but acts according to an infinite number of other Laws and Rules, which regard the whole frame and eternal courſe of Nature, whereof Man is but a ſmall Particle, and all Individual Beings are by the neceſſity and Laws of Nature only, ordained in ſuch a certain manner to exiſt and operate; ſo that if there be any thing in Nature, which ſeemeth to us abſur'd, and rediculous, or evil, 'tis becauſe we know things only in part, and becauſe we are for the moſt part ignorant of the Order, Courſe, and Coherence of Univerſal Nature, and would have all things directed and governed by our Reaſon; when in the mean time, that which our Reaſon thinks evil, is not ſo in reſpect of the courſe and Laws of Univerſal Nature, but only in reſpect of the Laws of our particular Nature.

But without doubt or diſpute, 'tis very much for Mens advantage, to live according to the Laws and Dictates of Reaſon, which, as I have ſaid, intends nothing elſe but the real good of mankind; and there is no body who doth not deſire to live in ſafety and out of fear, which is impoſſible, ſo long as it is lawful

lawful for every Man to do what he liſts; and Reaſon hath no greater priviledge than Hatred or Anger. He that lives where there is continual Enmity, Hatred, Wrath, and Deceit, muſt live always in danger and fear, and therefore Men avoid them as much as they can: When we likewiſe conſider, that Men live wretchedly and miſerably without mutual Aſſiſtance and the conduct of Reaſon, as we have ſhewed in the fourth Chapter, it muſt clearly appear, that if Men will live ſecurely without fear, there is an abſolute neceſſity of uniting themſelves and agreeing together, to transfer the Right which every particular Man hath by Nature to all things, upon the whole collective Body aſſembled and living together in Society, which Right is to be determined and directed, not by the ſtrength and Appetite of every ſingle perſon, but by the Power and Will of the whole aſſembled together, which would however be a vain attempt, if that Society would ſtill follow the Dictates of ſenſual Appetite. By the impulſe of ſenſual deſire, every Man is carried a ſeveral way, and therefore they muſt ſtedfaſtly reſolve, and firmly covenant to govern and direct all things, according to the dictates of Reaſon, (which no Man will oppoſe that is not out of his Wits) and muſt bridle all deſires that are injurious to one another: They muſt

muſt do nothing to others, which they would not have done to themſelves. And laſtly, muſt defend one anothers Right, as they would their own: Why ſuch an agreement ought to be entred into, and ought to ſtand firm and inviolable, is our next enquiry. It is the Univerſal Law of Human Nature, that no Man ſhould quit or neglect any thing, which he thinks to be for his good, unleſs it be for the hope of a greater good; (that is) every Man of two goods ought to chuſe the greateſt, and of two evils the leaſt; I mean, that which ſeemeth to the Chuſer the greateſt, or the leaſt; becauſe things are not ſometimes in themſelves what we judge them to be: And this Law is ſo deeply engraven upon Human Nature, that it is to be reckoned amongſt the Eternal Verities of which no Man can be ignorant. From this Law it neceſſarily follows, that no Man doth ever ſincerely promiſe, to depart from that Right which he hath to all things, and faithfully keep his Promiſe, unleſs it be for fear of a greater evil, or for the hope of a greater good. Suppoſe a Thief force me to promiſe, that I will give him all my Goods when he pleaſeth to have them; now ſeeing, as I have already ſaid, that my Natural Right is only limited and determined by my own Power, it is certain, that I may by falſhood and deceit, free my ſelf from this Thief, in promiſing

promiſing what he demands, and by the law of Nature I may deceitfully make him ſuch a Promiſe. Suppoſe likewiſe, that I have, without any fraudulent intention, promis'd a man not to taſte Meat, Drink, or any other kind of Nouriſhment, for the ſpace of twenty days; afterwards I perceive what a fooliſh promiſe I have made, and that I cannot without the hazard of my life keep it; in this Caſe, ſeeing I am by the Law of Nature obliged, of two evils to chuſe the leaſt, I may very lawfully break this promiſe, and do as if I had never made any; and it is my natural right ſo to do: for whether I have in truth, or but in mine own Opinion made an ill promiſe; yet ſince the evil is ſo great which I fear, I am authoriſed by the Law of Nature, to take any Courſe to avoid it: from whence we conclude, that no Promiſe or Covenant can have any obligatory Power, unleſs it be upon a conſideration, that ſome advantage or benefit is to accrue by it; take away the Conſideration, and the Covenant becomes null and void. It is therefore perfect folly, to expect from any Perſon, the conſtant keeping and faithful performance of his Promiſe or Contract, unleſs at the ſame time things be ſo order'd, that he who keeps not his Covenant, ſhall loſe much more than he can gain by the breach thereof; which is a Conſideration that ought firſt to take place

in the founding of any Commonwealth: if all men would willingly ſubmit to the conduct of Reaſon, and knew what was neceſſary and profitable for the Publick, every man would deteſt fraud and deceit; and for the good and preſervation of the Commonwealth, would above all things faithfully perform his Promiſes, which is the Commonwealth's only defence and ſecurity: but men are far from being guided by reaſon, every man is led away by his Pleaſure and Luſts, and mens minds are often ſo poſſeſt with Covetouſneſs, Glory, Envy, Anger, and other Paſſions, that they have no room left for Reaſon; and therefore tho' men may promiſe, with external Signs of Faithfulneſs and Sincerity, and enter into Covenants to make good their Promiſes; yet no man can be ſure they will be made good, unleſs ſome benefit and advantage attend their performance; ſeeing every man by the Law of Nature may deal deceitfully, and break his promiſe, in hopes of greater good, or for fear of greater evil: but becauſe (as we have already ſhewn) natural right is determin'd by every man's particular power, it follows, that as much as every man either voluntarily, or by force transfers of his own Power upon another, from ſo much of his own right he parts with to another, and he hath Soveraign right over all, who hath the Supream Power, where-

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with he may by Force and ſevere Puniſhment which is Univerſally feared, keep all in ſubjection; which right he ſhall no longer retain, than he can preſerve the power of doing what he will, otherwiſe he muſt reign precariouſly, and no man that is ſtronger than he, is bound to obey him.

For this reaſon, without any repugnancy or reſiſtance made by natural right, may a Society be formed, and Covenants faithfully kept, if every particular perſon do transfer all the Power which he hath, upon the Society; which Society by that means will have the Soveraign right of nature to all things, (that is) will be poſſeſt with the Supream Power of Governing, which every one willingly or for fear of Puniſhment will be bound to obey. The Right or Power of ſuch a Society, is called Democracy, which is a general Aſſembly of men, who in fellowſhip have Soveraign right to all things within their Power; from whence it follows, that Supream Power is bound by no Law, but all ought to obey it in all things; which obedience every one did in expreſs words, or tacitly, and by implication promiſe, when he transfer'd all his own Power of defending himſelf, (that is) all his own natural right upon the Society: So that if any men intended to keep any thing to themſelves, at the ſame time they ought to have provided,

in the founding of any Commonwealth: if all men would willingly ſubmit to the conduct of Reaſon, and knew what was neceſſary and profitable for the Publick, every man would deteſt fraud and deceit; and for the good and preſervation of the Commonwealth, would above all things faithfully perform his Promiſes, which is the Commonwealth's only defence and ſecurity: but men are far from being guided by reaſon, every man is led away by his Pleaſure and Luſts, and mens minds are often ſo poſſeſt with Covetouſneſs, Glory, Envy, Anger, and other Paſſions, that they have no room left for Reaſon; and therefore tho' men may promiſe, with external Signs of Faithfulneſs and Sincerity, and enter into Covenants to make good their Promiſes; yet no man can be ſure they will be made good, unleſs ſome benefit and advantage attend their performance; ſeeing every man by the Law of Nature may deal deceitfully, and break his promiſe, in hopes of greater good, or for fear of greater evil: but becauſe (as we have already ſhewn) natural right is determin'd by every man's particular power, it follows, that as much as every man either voluntarily, or by force transfers of his own Power upon another, from ſo much of his own right he parts with to another, and he hath Soveraign right over all, who hath the Supream Power, where-

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and taken care for the defence and ſafe keeping thereof; but if they did not, nor could do it, without dividing, and conſequently deſtroying the Government and Commonwealth, that ought to be accounted an abſolute ſubmiſſion of themſelves to the will of the Supream Power; which being done abſolutely, and not only upon neceſſity, but likewiſe for very good reaſons, unleſs we will declare our ſelves Enemies to the Commonwealth, and act contrary to Reaſon, which perſwades us to defend the Commonwealth with our utmoſt power; we are bound to obey all the Commands of the Supream Power, be they never ſo abſurd; for even thoſe, Reaſon commands us to obey, that of two evils we may chuſe the leaſt: Conſider likewiſe, how eaſily every one may run into the danger, of ſubmitting himſelf abſolutely to the Will and Arbitrary Power of another; for as we have ſhewn, Supream Powers have no longer right of commanding what they will, than they can keep that Power; for as ſoon as they loſe it, they loſe likewiſe the right of commanding all things, and that right falls to him or them that can get and keep it; therefore it very rarely happens, that Supream Powers command harſh and unreaſonable things, for it very much concerns them to look to themſelves, to keep their Power, to mind the pub-

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lick good, and order all things by the Rules of Reaſon. *No violent Governments, ſaith Seneca, ever ſtood long:* It is obſervable that in Democratical Governments, ſevere and unreaſonable Commands are never much to be feared; for 'tis almoſt impoſſible, that the major part of an Aſſembly, if it be great, ſhould agree in that which is unreaſonable and abſurd; the Foundation and End likewiſe of that Government, being only to avoid the miſchiefs of boundleſs Appetite, and to keep Men as much as may be within the compaſs of Reaſon, that they may live together in Peace and Amity; which Foundation once taken away, down falls the whole Fabrick, againſt which Ruin to provide, is the duty of the Supream Power: The Subjects part is to obey, and acknowledge nothing elſe to be right, but what is declared to be ſo by the Supream Power. But ſome may think, that by this Rule, I make Subjects Servants or Slaves, becauſe they account him a Servant who acts by Command, and him free, who only obeys his own Will; which is not abſolutely true, for he that gives himſelf up to his own pleaſure and deſires, and neither ſees or does what is for his own good, is indeed the greateſt of Slaves; and he only is free, who of his own accord lives according to the dictates of Reaſon. Acting by Command, which is Obedience, doth in ſome ſort take

away Liberty, but 'tis the account upon which a Man acts, that makes him a Servant; for if the end of the action be wholly and ſolely for the benefit of him that commands, without any advantage to the Agent, then the Agent is a Servant, and unprofitable to himſelf; but in a Commonwealth or Government, where the welfare of all the People, and not of him that governs, is the principal and Supreme Law; he that in all things obeys the Supreme Power, is not an unprofitable Servant to himſelf, but is to be counted a Subject, and therefore that Commonwealth is counted freeſt, where the Laws are founded upon moſt Reaſon, for there every Man, when he will, may be free, in living with his own intire conſent, according to the Rules of Reaſon: Tho' Children are bound to obey all the Command of their Parents, yet they are not Servants, for the Commands of Parents tend chiefly to the good of their Children, and therefore we acknowledge there is great difference between a Servant, a Son, and a Subject, who are thus defined. A Servant is he, who is bound to obey the Commands of his Maſter which reſpect only the Maſters benefit. A Son is he, that by his Parents Command doth that which is for his own good: And a Subject is he, who by the Command of the Supreme Power, doth that which is for the good of

the Publick, and conſequently, as he is one of that Body, for his own benefit: By what I have ſaid, I think I have clearly ſhewn, what is the Foundation of Democratical Government, of which, before all others, I chuſe to treat, becauſe it ſeems moſt natural, and comes neareſt to that freedom and liberty which Nature allows every Man; for in Democratical Government, no Man ſo transfers his own Natural Right to another, as for ever after to be excluded from conſultation, but only transfers it upon the major part of the Society, of which he ſtill makes one, and upon this all remain as they were before, in their natural eſtate, equal. Moreover, I purpoſely treated of this Government, becauſe it beſt ſuited with my Intention, which was to ſpeak of the benefit of Liberty in a Commonwealth: I will therefore have nothing to do with the Foundations of other Powers; nor to know their Right, is it neceſſary to know whence they had, and often have their Original; that is too manifeſt. From what I have declared, where ever the Supreme Power is, whether in one perſon, in few, or in all, 'tis certain, that they have the Soveraign right of commanding what they will, and whoever either willingly or by compulſion transfers to another the Power of defending himſelf, he hath clearly parted with his Natural Right, and conſe-

quently muſt reſolve to obey him that hath it in all things, which he continues obliged to do, as long as the King, the Nobles, or the People can preſerve the Supreme Power which they received, which was the firſt Foundation of transferring Natural Right, of which I need ſay no more.

The Foundations and Right of Government being laid open, it is eaſie to determine, what is private civil Right, what is Injury or Wrong; what is Juſtice, what Injuſtice in a Civil State. Laſtly, Who is a Confederate or Ally, who is an Enemy, and what is Treaſon. By private civil Right, no other thing can be underſtood, but every Man's keeping and preſerving himſelf in the ſtate wherein he is; which Liberty is limited and determined, by the Decrees and Dictates of the Supreme Power, and defended by the ſole Authority thereof; for after every one hath transferr'd to another, his right of living according to his own Will, which only bounded his own power; I mean, his liberty of defending himſelf; he is then obliged to live according to his Will, to whom he hath parted with that Liberty, and from him only muſt expect Protection. Injury or Wrong, is when a Citizen or Subject is compell'd to ſuffer loſs or damage from another, contrary to Civil Right, and the Decrees of the Supreme Power; for there can be

be no ſuch thing as Wrong or Injury, any where but in a Civil State, nor can any wrong be done to Subjects by the Supreme Power, which may lawfully do whatever it pleaſeth, and therefore hath place only amongſt private perſons, who by Law are obliged not to offend one another. Juſtice is a conſtant reſolution of giving to every one, that which by the Law rightly interpreted belongs to him: Juſtice and Injuſtice, are ſometimes called Equity and Iniquity, becauſe they that are appointed to end Suits and Differences, are bound not to have any reſpect to perſons, but to look upon all as equals, and equally to defend every Man's right; neither envying the rich nor deſpiſing the poor. Confederates are Men of two Cities or Societies, who to avoid the danger and inconveniencies of War, or for any other advantage and benefit, mutually covenant not to offend or hurt one another; but in caſe of neceſſity to aſſiſt and help one another, both preſerving their own Power and Dominion. This League or Contract, will ſo long continue firm and binding, as the conſideration of danger or profit upon which it was founded continues; becauſe no perſon covenants, or is oblig'd to perform his contracts, unleſs it be in hope of ſome good, or fear of ſome evil, which being the Foundation of all Contracts; take away that Baſis, Experience tells us, they all fall to the ground: For tho'

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divers Empires and Governments, do mutually covenant not to do any thing to the prejudice or hurt of one another, yet 'tis always the endeavour of both, to hinder one another from growing too powerful; neither do they believe one anothers promiſes, unleſs they be fully ſatisfied, that the End of their agreement be for the benefit of both; nor is there any wrong in the caſe, for who but a Fool, ignorant of the right of Supreme Power, will give credit to the words or promiſes of him who having Supreme Power, hath right to do what he will, and who is obliged by no other Law, but the publick ſafety and benefit of the people under his Government? we likewiſe obſerve, that Religion and Piety ſignify very little; for who ever hath the Supreme Power, cannot without conſequent miſchief, keep his Promiſes which prove prejudicial and deſtructive to his People and Government; or that he cannot perform them without breaking Faith with his Subjects; by which Faith he is principally obliged, and which uſually with Oaths he ſolemnly and religiouſly promiſeth to keep. An Enemy is one that liveth out of the Commonwealth, and neither as a Confederate or Subject, will own its Power or Government; for 'tis not the hatred of a Commonwealth, but its Right and Power, which maketh a Man an Enemy; for the Power of a Commonwealth over him, who will by no kind

kind of Contract own its Power, is the ſame that it hath over him who doth it harm, becauſe it hath right to compel him one way or other, to yield and ſubmit to it, or confederate with it: Laſtly, Treaſon in Subjects or Citizens, is only where they have by expreſs or imply'd Contract, transferr'd all their right to the City or Commonwealth, and that Subject is counted guilty of Treaſon, who endeavours to uſurp the right of the Supreme Power to himſelf, or transfer it upon another; I ſay, he that but endeavours it, for if none were to be condemned till after the commiſſion of the fact, the puniſhment would many times come too late; therefore I ſay poſitively, he that by any means goes about to uſurp, or take away the right of the Supreme Power, making no difference whether the Commonwealth ſhall be a gainer or loſer by it, upon what account ſoever he attempted or did it, yet he hath committed Treaſon, and is juſtly condemned, which every one alſo acknowledgeth to be juſt in War; for if a Souldier keep not his ſtation, but without his General's knowledge or command, aſſaults the Enemy, tho' he beat him, and did it very adviſedly, yet doing it of his own head, he deſerves death, having violated his own Oath and his Generall's Authority: Now tho' Subjects do not ſee that their caſe and a Souldiers is alike, yet in truth the reaſon is the ſame in both, for ſeeing

ing the Commonwealth ought to be governed, defended, and preſerved, by the Counſel only of the Supreme Power, and all have abſolutely covenanted that this right ſhall reſide only in the Supreme Power; if any Man ſhall at his own Will and Pleaſure, without the knowledge of the Supreme Council, make any publick attempt, which would certainly prove very advantageous to the Commonwealth, yet having violated the right of the Supreme Power, he is lawfully and deſervedly condemned.

Now to clear all ſcruples, if any Man ask, Whether maintaining that a Man in his Natutural State hath Natural Right to live according to the Laws and Dictates of his own Appetite, be not flatly contrary to the revealed Law of God? Seeing every Man, whether he have or have not the uſe of Reaſon, is equally obliged by God's Command to love his Neighbour as himſelf, and therefore we cannot, without being very injurious, do any harm to another and live according to our own Luſts. This Objection is eaſily anſwered; for if we conſider only the ſtate of Nature; that ſtate, and Nature it ſelf, were before there was any Religion; for by Nature no Man knows that there is any obligation upon him to obey God, nor can he come to the knowledge of it by Reaſon; but whoever knows it, muſt know it only by Revelation confirm'd with Signs; and therefore, before Revelation no body was

bound

bound by the Divine Law, of which every Man must be necessarily ignorant. The state of Nature then, and the state of Religion, must not be confounded, but considered apart, and as we have proved by *Paul's* Authority, the state of Nature is understood to be without Religion, without Law, without sin or wrong doing. Nor do we consider the state of Nature as before, and without the revealed Law of God, in respect of Ignorance only; but in respect also of that freedom and liberty in which all Men were born; for if Men by Nature were bound by the Law of God, or if God's Law were by Nature a Law, there was no need of God's making a Covenant with Men, and obliging them by Oath and Contract. It must therefore be absolutely granted, that God's Law took place, from the time that Men by an express Covenant with God, promised to obey him in all things; by which Covenant and Promise, they did as it were depart from their natural freedom, and transferr'd their natural right upon God; in like manner as we have declared is done in a Civil State. But of this I will treat more at large in the following Chapter. It may by way of Objection be further demanded, how I can maintain, that Supreme Powers still retain their natural right of doing what they will; when Supreme Powers as well as Subjects are bound by the Law of God? To solve this difficulty, which doth not rise

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ſo much from the ſtate, as from the right of Nature; I ſay, that the ſame conſideration which obligeth a Man in the ſtate of Nature, to live according to the dictates of Reaſon; obligeth him likewiſe to God's revealed Law, namely, becauſe it is better and ſafer for him ſo to do: But however, if he will not, 'tis ſtill but at his own peril, and therefore he may live according to his own Will, and is not bound to live by any other Man's direction, or to acknowledge any mortal Man to be his Judge, or upon any religious account his Superiour. And this is the Right and Power which I ſay the Supreme Power ſtill retains. Supreme Powers may conſult Men, but are not bound to acknowledge any Man their Judge, nor any Man but themſelves the Aſſertor or Protector of Religion, a Prophet only excepted; who confirms his expreſs Miſſion from God by undoubted Signs and Wonders; and then neither, do Supreme Powers acknowledge Man but God to be their Judge; but if the Supreme Powers will not obey God in his revealed Law, 'tis at their own peril, no Natural or Civil Right can reſiſt them, for Civil Right depends upon the Decree and Will of the Supreme Power, and Natural Right depends upon the Laws of Nature, which do not reſpect Religion as it intends and deſigns the benefit of mankind only, but were fitted and accommodated to the order and courſe of Univerſal Nature,

ture, (that is) the Eternal Decree of God, whereof we are ignorant: And this is what others mean, who do not ſo clearly expreſs themſelves, when they ſay, that a Man may ſin againſt the revealed Will of God, but not againſt his Eternal Decree, by which he predeſtinated and ordained all things: If any Man ask me, when the Supreme Power commands any thing againſt Religion, and the Obedience which we by expreſs Covenant have promiſed to God, whether we ought to obey God or Man? I anſwer very briefly, reſolving to ſpeak more fully of it in the following Chapter, That above all things we ought to obey God, when we have a certain and undubitable Revelation; but becauſe Men are uſually very much miſtaken in matters of Religion, and becauſe of the diverſity of their Diſpoſitions, have great conteſts about their own Phancies, as we find by woful experience; it is certain, that if no Man ſhould be bound to obey the Supreme Power, in things which a Man thinks concern his Religion; the Civil Right and Laws of the Commonwealth, would depend upon every particular Man's different Judgment and Affection; for no Man would be bound by any publick Law, which he thought contrary to his Faith or Superſtition; and under this pretence every one would be at liberty to do what he pleaſed: For this reaſon therefore, Supreme Power, to whom by Divine and Natural Right, it belongs to preſerve and protect the Laws of Government, ought to have the ſole power of judging, determining, and eſtabliſhing Religion; and all Men are bound by their Faith and Allegiance, which God hath commanded ſhould be kept, to obey all the Commands and Decrees of the Supreme Power which concern Religion; but if they that have the Supreme Power be Heathen

and

and Infidels, we muſt either make no agreement with them, or ſuffer all extremities if we do covenant with them, and transfer our Right and Power upon them; ſeeing we thereby deprive our ſelves of defending Religion and our ſelves: We are bound to obey and keep Faith with them, and may be compell'd to it, unleſs it be where God by undoubted Revelation hath declared a perſon to be a Tyrant, or excepting the perſon by Name, hath promiſed his particular aid and aſſiſtance againſt him. We read, that of all the *Jews* which were in *Babylon*, there were only three young Men who were aſſured of God's particular aſſiſtance, that would not obey *Nebuchadnezzar*; all the reſt but *Daniel*, whom the King himſelf adored, were compell'd by the Law to obey him; perhaps believing in their Minds, that by God's Decree they were delivered into that Kings Hands, and that by God's appointment he was to be King, and keep the Supreme Power. *Eleazer*, on the contrary, however it went with his Country, gave an Example of his conſtancy to his followers, and would rather endure all extremities than ſuffer their Right and Power to be transferr'd upon the *Greeks*, and tried all means poſſible to avoid being compell'd to embrace the Faith and Religion of the Heathen; which is confirmed by daily experience. The Supreme Powers that profeſs Chriſtian Religion, for the ſecurity of their Government, make no ſcruple of entring into Leagues and Covenants with *Turks* and *Infidels*, and command their Subjects who live amongſt them, not to uſe any greater liberty in Religion, or any other Affairs, than the Articles of ſuch Leagues, or the Country in which they live allow; as appears by the Contract, which I have already told you, the *Hollanders* made with the people of *Japan*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

'Tis neither neceſſary or poſſible, to tranſfer all things upon the Supreme Power: Of the Jews Commonwealth, what it was during the Life of Moſes, *and what after his death before they choſe Kings, and of its Excellency: What were the Cauſes of the deſtruction of ſo divine a Commonwealth, and why it could not ſubſiſt without Sedition.*

THough much of what hath been ſaid in the preceding Chapter, of the right of Supreme Powers, and transferring on them every Mans natural Rights, may upon ſerious conſideration be very agreeable to Practice; yet when all is done, many things will remain in theory only, and be found abſolutely impracticable: For no Man can ſo far transfer his Power, and conſequently his Right upon another, as to ceaſe from being a Man; nor was there ever any

Supreme Power that could do all that it would: 'Tis vain for Supreme Power to command a Subject to hate his Friend and love his Enemy; or to command a Man not to be provoked with Reproach and Contempt, or not to desire to be freed from fear, and other things of the like kind, which necessarily follow from the Laws of Nature: this is made manifest by daily Experience; for Men never so depart from their Right, or so transfer their Power upon others, but that they are still feared even by those to whom they have transfer'd it; for Government is many times as much in danger of Subjects deprived of their Right, as it is of foreign Enemies; and if Men could be so far divested of their Natural Right, as afterwards not to be able to do any thing but according to the Will and Pleasure of those that have the Supreme Power; then indeed all sorts of Tyranny and Violence might without danger be practis'd on Subjects, which I believe cannot enter into any Mans thoughts; so that it must be granted that every Man retains much of his own Right, which still depends upon no bodies will but his own. Now that it may be rightly understood how far the right of Government extends it self, it is to be

be obſerved, That the Power of Government doth not preciſely conſiſt in its being able to compel men by fear, but alſo in all other means whereby it is able to make men obey its Commands; for 'tis not the Reaſon of obeying; but actual Obedience that makes a man a Subject. Upon what account ſoever a man reſolves to perform the Commands of Supreme Power, whether for fear of puniſhment, for hope of benefit, for love of his Country, or any other affection; yet ſtill he acts by the Command of the Supreme Power, though it be upon deliberation with himſelf. It is not therefore to be concluded, That a man who doth any thing by his own counſel and deliberation, acts by his own Power, and not by the Authority of the Government; for being obliged by love, or forced by fear, he ſtill of his own accord acts to avoid ſome evil. Either there muſt be no ſuch thing as Authority and Power over Subjects, unleſs it did neceſſarily extend it ſelf to all things which make men upon deliberation ſubmit to it; and conſequently whatever a Subject doth agreeable to the Commands of the Supreme Power, whether he do it for fear, love, (or, which is more frequent) for hope and fear together, or out of reverence, which is compoſed of fear and admirati-

on, or for any other Reaſon; yet he ſtill acts not by his own Power, but by the Authority and Power of the Government: And hence it is very evident, that Obedience doth not ſo much reſpect external Actions, as the inward Conſent and Submiſſion of the Mind; and he is moſt under the Power of another, who with a willing mind, deliberately reſolves to execute all his Commands. That Power is always greateſt, which reigns over the hearts of Subjects; but if they ſhould be accounted moſt powerful who are moſt feared, how potent muſt they be, who are govern'd by Tyrants, who commonly dread nothing ſo much as their own Subjects. Though there cannot be ſo great a Command over mens Minds, as there may be over their Tongues, yet the Minds of men are in ſome kind under the Dominion of Supreme Power, becauſe it can ſeveral ways bring it ſo about, that a very great part of the People ſhall believe, love, and hate, whatever the Supreme Power pleaſeth: And though this be not effected by the direct Commands of the Supreme Power, yet Experience tells us, 'tis often done by the Authority (that is) by the direction of that Power: So that we may without any difficulty conceive, how men may believe, love, hate, deſpiſe,

ſpiſe, and be carried away with any other Paſſion, to which the Authority of the Supreme Power pleaſeth to incline them.

But though upon this very account we may conceive the Right and Power of Government to be very large, yet 'tis impoſſible that any Dominion ſhould be ſo great and abſolute, that he or they who have it, ſhould be able in all things to do what they pleaſe: therefore, as I have already ſaid, it is not my intention to ſhew how to form a Government that ſhall be perpetual; but my purpoſe is only to take notice of thoſe things, which *Moſes* by Divine Revelation declared were moſt likely to preſerve and perpetuate a Commonwealth. We ſhall then ſee what thoſe things are, which for the benefit and ſafety of a Commonwealth, are to be granted to Subjects by the Supream Power.

Reaſon and Experience tell us, That the ſafety and preſervation of Government, depends chiefly upon the fidelity of Subjects, and their Courage and Conſtancy in executing the Commands of the Supream Power; but the way of teaching Subjects to be conſtantly faithful and couragious, is not ſo eaſily found out; becauſe Governours, as well as the go-

verned, are Men, and not caring for Labour, are ſtill prone to Luſt. They think ſecuring Government to be an impoſſible Work, who have tried the mutable Humours of the Multitude, which is never ruled by Reaſon, but by their own Paſſions and Affections, ready for all raſh Attempts, eaſily debauched by Covetouſneſs and Luxury; every ſingle man thinks he knows all things, and judgeth every thing to be juſt or unjuſt, right or wrong, as it makes for his profit or loſs: Pride makes him ſcorn to be governed by his Equals, ſtill envying another man's better Reputation or greater Fortune, which is never equal, deſires and rejoyceth in his Neighbours Misfortunes. There is no need of more Inſtances; all know how mens Minds are agitated and poſſeſt, and to what Miſcheif men are hurried headlong, by diſlike of their preſent Condition, by deſire of Change, by Rage and contemptible Poverty. To prevent all theſe things, and to conſtitute a Government wherein there ſhall be no place left for fraud, and ſo to order all things, that all People, of what Diſpoſition ſoever, ſhall prefer the publick good before their own private benefit, is the great difficulty. The Neceſſity of preſerving and ſecuring Government, hath much buſied

mens

mens heads; but it hath been hitherto impoſſible, to put Supreme Power into a condition of being leſs in danger, or in leſs fear, of Subjects than of Enemies: Witneſs the *Roman* Commonwealth, never conquer'd by its own Enemies, but often oppreſt and overthrown by its own Citizens, and eſpecially in that Civil War of *Veſpaſian* againſt *Vitellius*; as may be ſeen in the Fourth Book of *Tacitus*, where he deſcribes the miſerable condition of the City of *Rome*. *Alexander the Great* (ſaith *Quintus Curtius*, in the End of his Eighth Book) did more fear the Fame of a Subject than an Enemy, becauſe he was afraid his own People might ruine his Greatneſs. Diſtruſting his own Fate, he thus beſpake his Friends: *Let it be your care only to preſerve me from the Treachery and Conſpiracy of my own People, and then no hazards in the War ſhall put me in fear.* Philip *was more ſecure in the Front of Battel abroad, than in the Theatre at home; he oft-times avoided the force of his Enemies, but he could not eſcape the violence of his own Friends; and if you conſider the End of other Kings, you ſhall number more that have been ſlain by their own Subjects, than by any Forreign Power* (See *Quintus Curtius*, *lib.* 9. §. 6.) This was the Reaſon why Kings, who were Uſurpers, to ſecure

themſelves and their Dominion, endeavour'd to perſwade the People, they were deſcended from the Immortal Gods; becauſe they thought, if their Subjects did not take them for Men, like themſelves, but believed them to be Gods, they would be the better contented to deliver themſelves up to their Power and Government. *Auguſtus* perſwaded the *Romans*, that he was deſcended from *Æneas*, the Son of *Venus*, one of their Deities; he had Temples dedicated to him, and was worſhipt by *Flamens* and *Prieſts*, in the ſame manner that other Gods were. *Tacitus* in his Firſt Book of *Annals*, tells us, That *Alexander* would be ſaluted by the Name of *Jupiter*'s Son, which was not Pride, but Deſign, as appears by the Anſwer he return'd to the invective Speech made by *Hermolaus*: (In the Eighth Book and Eighth Section of *Quintus Curtius*) *Alexander* ſpeaks to this purpoſe: *One thing is very ridiculous which* Hermolaus *requires, That I ſhould not own* Jupiter *to be my Father, being ſo declared by his Oracle, as if the Anſwer of the Gods were in my Power; he offer'd me the Name of his Son, which was very ſuitable to the Deſigns I am now about; I wiſh the Indians would alſo believe me to be a God: Succeſs in War depends much upon Fame, and that which is falſly*

falſly believed, ſometimes works the ſame effects which things do that are true. In which few words, he very artificially endeavours to continue People in their ignorance, and neatly inſinuates the Deſign of his diſſembling, which *Cleo* likewiſe did in his Oration, whereby he endeavour'd to perſwade the *Macedonians* to ſooth and flatter the King: for after he had with admiration ſpoken in praiſe of *Alexander*, and reckon'd up all his Merits, giving a colour of Truth to the Fraud, he ſhews the advantages gain'd by it, in words to this effect. *The* Perſians *are not only prudent, but pious in worſhipping their Kings as Gods, becauſe it was the Safety of Majeſty*; and then concludes, That he himſelf would be the firſt, who at the King's entrance, would fall down upon the Earth, and worſhip him; and that he thought the wiſeſt amongſt them would follow his Example: (See *Curtius* in his Eighth Book, §. 8.) But the *Macedonians* were wiſer: Nor can any but meer *Barbarians* be ſo groſly cheated, and of Subjects, ſuffer themſelves to be made Slaves, altogether unprofitable to themſelves. Others have, with more eaſe, perſwaded the World, That the Majeſty of Kings is Sacred, that they are God's Vicegerents on Earth, ordained by God, and not eſtabliſht by the Votes

Votes and Conſent of Men, but preſerved and defended by the particular aid and protection of Divine Providence. This, and much more, have Monarchs deviſed to ſecure their Government, with which I will not meddle, but proceed to thoſe things, which, for the preſervation of Government, Divine Revelation taught *Moſes*.

We have already declared, in the Fifth Chapter, that after the *Iſraelites* went out of *Egypt*, they were not ſubject to the Laws or power of any other Nation; but it was lawful for them to Inſtitute what Laws, and poſſeſs what Lands they pleaſed; for when they were freed from the intollerable bondage of the *Egyptians*, and were not bound by Covenant to any Mortal, they again recover'd their natural Right to all things which were in their Power, and every Man might freely reſolve whether he would keep his natural Right, or part with, and transfer it to another. Being then in this natural State, by the Counſel of *Moſes*, in whom all had a very great truſt and confidence, they reſolved to transfer their Power upon no mortal Man, but upon God only; and without further delay promis'd, all with one Voice, to obey God in all things, and never to own

any

any other Power, but ſuch as God by Prophetical Revelation ſhould inſtitute and appoint. This Promiſe and Tranſlation of their Right and Power upon God, was in the ſame manner that we have ſuppoſed it to be done in a common Society, when Men reſolve to depart with their natural Right: For as it appears (*Exod.* chap. 24. ver. 7.) they freely without any Compulſion, not terrified with any threats, did by expreſs Covenant and Oath, part with their natural Right, and transfer'd it upon God; and that the Covenant might be firm and binding, without any ſuſpicion of fraud, God Covenanted nothing with them till after they had made tryal of his wonderful Power; by which they had already been, and were afterwards to be preſerved; (ſee *Exod.* chap. 19. v. 4, 5.) for upon this very ground of believing, that the Power of God only could ſave them, they transfer'd all their Power of preſerving themſelves, and conſequently all their Right upon God. The Government then of the Jews was only in God, and therefore by vertue of the Covenant was called the Kingdom of God; God was rightful King of the Jews, and conſequently the Enemies of that Government were Gods Enemies, and the Subjects

jects of that Commonwealth, who went about to uſurp that Government, were guilty of Treaſon againſt his Divine Majeſty, and the Laws of that Commonwealth were the Laws and Commands of God: So that in this Commonwealth, Civil Right and Religion, which we have ſhewn conſiſts only in Obedience towards God, were but one and the ſame thing: My meaning is, that the Doctrines of Religion were Laws and Commands; Piety was Juſtice, and Impiety wrong and Injuſtice: he that forſook the publick Religion ceaſed to be a Subject, and upon that very account was thought an Enemy; he that dy'd for Religion was thought to dye for his Country, and between Religion and Civil Right there was no difference. Upon this account this Government might very well be called Theocracy, ſeeing the Subjects thereof were bound by no Law but what was revealed by God. But theſe things were thus, more in opinion then reality, for the Jews did indeed ſtill retain the Abſolute Power of Government, as will appear by what ſhall be preſently declared, namely by the Form and Rules whereby their Government was Adminiſtred, which is now my purpoſe to explain.

Seeing

Seeing the Jews did not transfer their Power upon any other Man, but all equally parted from it as is done in Democratical-government, and all cryed with one Voice, Whatſoever God himſelf (without any other intermediate Perſon) ſhall ſpeak to us, that will we do; it clearly appears by this Agreement, they all continued equal, and the Power and Right of conſulting God, of receiving and interpreting Laws, was equal in them all, and the Adminiſtration of the Government was in the whole Congregation. Upon this ground all equally at firſt hearken'd what God would ſay, and what he would Command; but in this firſt meeting they were ſo terrified, and heard God ſpeaking with ſo muh aſtoniſhment, that every Man thought that day would be his laſt. Full of very great fear they came again to *Moſes*, and ſaid, *We have heard Gods Voice out of the midſt of the Fire: Now therefore why ſhould we dye? This great Fire will conſume us, we ſhall dye if we hear the Voice of the Lord our God any more; therefore go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God ſhall ſay, and ſpeake thou unto us, all that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, we will hear and do it.* By ſaying this they clearly aboliſht the firſt Covenant, and transfer'd upon

upon *Moſes* their own Right of conſulting God, and interpreting his Laws and Decrees; for here they did not as before, promiſe to obey all that God ſhould ſay to them, but all that God ſhould ſpeak to *Moſes*; (See *Deut.* c. 5. v. 25, 26, 28.) ſo that now none but *Moſes*, became the giver and interpreter of Gods Laws, and conſequently was the Supreme Judg, over whom no Man had power; he only was Gods Vicegerent among the Jews, in him reſided the Supreme Majeſty, ſeeing he only had the power of conſulting God, of returning Gods Anſwers to the People, and compelling the People to obey them. I ſay he only, for if any Man, during the Life of *Moſes*, had preached any thing in the name of God, though he were a true Prophet, yet he had been a guilty Uſurper. (ſee *Numb.* c. 11. v. 27, 28.) And here we ought to obſerve, that though the People choſe *Moſes*, yet they had not the power of Electing any Succeſſor in his place; for at that very time when they transfer'd their Right and Power of conſulting God upon *Moſes*, and promis'd to receive from him Gods anſwers, they loſt all their power, and whoever *Moſes* declared ſhould be his Succeſſor, him were they bound to accept as choſen by God himſelf;

ſelf; and had *Moſes* choſen one who was to have, as *Moſes* himſelf had, the whole Adminiſtration of the Government; namely, the Power of conſulting God alone in his Tent, and conſequently the Power of making and abrogating Laws; of making War and Peace; ſending Embaſſadors; appointing Judges; chuſing a Succeſſor, and ordering all other things that belong to Supreme Power; the Government had been perfectly Monarchical, and there had been no other difference between the Jewiſh and other Monarchies but this, that other Monarchies are or ſhould be Govern'd according to Reaſon, by Gods Decree, of which the Monarch is ignorant; but the Jewiſh Monarchy, by Gods Decree revealed only to the Monarch; which difference doth not at all diminiſh, but increaſe the Monarchs Power and Dominion over all, but the condition of the Subjects in both Monarchies is the ſame: For the Subjects in both being ignorant of Gods Decree, do abſolutely depend upon the Mouth of the Monarch, and he only is to declare what is right and what is wrong. And if the People believe that the Monarch is to command nothing but by the will of God revealed to him, in that very reſpect they are not the leſs, but the more

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ſubject to him. Now *Moſes* did not chuſe any ſuch Succeſſor, but left Succeſſors, who were ſo to Adminiſter the Government, that it could not be called Popular, Ariſtocratical, or Monarchical; but rather Theocratical: For the Power of Interpreting Laws, and Communicating Gods Anſwers to the People, was in one Perſon, and the Right and Power of Adminiſtring the Government, according to the Laws already explain'd, and according to the Anſwers already made known, was in another. (See *Numb.* c. 27. v. 21.) But that theſe things may be clearly underſtood, I will, in order, declare in what manner the Government of the Jews was Adminiſtred. Firſt, The People were commanded to build a Houſe, which was to be God's, that is, the Palace of the Supreme Majeſty of that Government; and this was not to be built at any particular Perſons coſt, but the publick charge of all the People, that the Houſe where Counſel was to be asked of God might be Publick and Common to all: The *Levites* were the Courtiers or Officers of this Divine Palace; of theſe, the Chief next to God after the King, was choſen *Aaron*, the Brother of *Moſes*, whoſe Legitimate Sons ſucceeded him: He, as next to God, was the chief Interpreter

preter of the Divine Laws, return'd the Anſwers of the Divine Oracle, and made Supplications to God for the People; had he herewith had the commanding Power, there had nothing wanted of his being an abſolute Monarch; but that Power he had not, and the whole Tribe of *Levy* was ſo far excluded from having any hand in the Adminiſtration of government, that they were not allow'd to poſſeſs, with the reſt of the Tribes, any Lands in their own right, upon which they might live; but were to be maintain'd and relieved by the reſt of the People, as a Tribe dedicated to God. The Militia was choſen out of the reſt of the twelve Tribes, they were commanded to invade the Country of the *Canaanites* to divide their Lands into twelve parts, and to diſtribute the parts amongſt the Tribes by Lot. *Joſhua* was elected General and Chief Commander of the Militia, who only in future Affairs and Emergencies had the power of conſulting God: not as *Moſes* had alone in his Tent or in the Tabernacle, but by the High-Prieſt, to whom only God gave his Anſwers: The power of paſſing thoſe Anſwers which were deliver'd to the High-Prieſt into Laws, and the power of compelling the People to obey them; the

Manner and Means of executing thoſe Commands; the choice of the Militia, or the choice of thoſe that ſhould chuſe it; of ſending Embaſſadors in his own name; the whole power of making and carrying on War, depended abſolutely and ſolely upon the Will of *Joſhua*, into whoſe power and place no body did ever lawfully ſucceed, nor was there ever any other choſen, unleſs by God himſelf, the Peoples affairs not requiring any ſuch choice; but all matters of Peace and War were under the direction and government of the Princes of the Tribes. All from twenty years old to ſixty were commanded to bear Arms; the Army was formed only out of their own People, who did not ſwear Fidelity to the General or Chief-Prieſt, but to God and Religion, and were therefore called the Lords Hoſt, and God, by the Jews, the Lord of Hoſts: For this reaſon the Ark of the Covenant, upon which depended Victory or the loſs of their Battels, was always carryed in the midſt of the Army, that the People beholding as it were their King, might fight with their utmoſt courage and ſtrength. From theſe Commands of *Moſes* to his Succeſſors, we conclude that he choſe Adminiſtrators or Miniſters of State, but none that had abſolute

ſolute Power; for he gave to no body the ſole power of Conſulting God when he pleas'd, and conſequently not the Authority which he himſelf had, of making and abrogating Laws; of making War or Peace; of chuſing Officers for the Temple, or in any of the Cities; all which do properly belong to him that hath Supreme Power. The Chief Prieſt indeed had power of interpreting the Laws, and returning Gods Anſwers to the People; but not as *Moſes*, when he pleas'd, but only when he was called upon by the General or Supreme Council to do it. On the other ſide, the General of the Army, and the Councils, could conſult God when they pleas'd, but could not receive God's Anſwers from any but the High Prieſt; and therefore what God ſaid by the Mouth of the High Prieſt, was not a Law and Decree, as it was in the Mouth of *Moſes*, but only Anſwers; and when thoſe Anſwers were received by *Joſhua* and the Council, then had they the force of Laws and Decrees. Moreover, the High Prieſt, who receiv'd Anſwers from God, had nothing to do with the Militia, nor had he any ſhare in the Government; and on the other ſide, they that were poſſeſt of Lands had no power to make Laws: The Chief Prieſt *Aaron*,

and his Son *Eleazer*, were both choſen by *Moſes*; but when *Moſes* was dead no man had the power of chuſing the *High Prieſt*, but the Son ſtill ſucceeded the Father. The General of the Army was alſo elected by *Moſes*, not by the Power of the *High Prieſt*, but took upon him the Generalſhip or Supreme Power by vertue of that Authority which *Moſes* gave him; and therefore when *Joſhua* dyed, the *High Prieſt* choſe no body into his place, nor did the Princes ask Council of God concerning a new General, but every one commanded the particular Militia of his own Tribe, and all the Princes, jointly together, had the ſame power over the whole Army that *Joſhua* had; and it ſeems there was no need of a General, unleſs when they were to fight againſt an Enemy with joint Forces, of which there was conſtant occaſion and neceſſity in *Joſhua*'s time, when they had no fixed place of abode, and all things were in Common: But after all the Tribes were by right of Conqueſt poſſeſt of Lands, which they were commanded to keep and divide amongſt themſelves, and Property began; then there was no more need of a General, becauſe the ſeveral Tribes by that diviſion, became not only fellow Subjects but Confederates; they were in

reſpect

reſpect of God and Religion fellow-Subjects, but in reſpect of one Tribes power over another, no more than Confederates. In all particulars (that of the Jews publick Temple excepted) like the States of the ſeven United Provinces; for the diviſion of that which is common into parts, is nothing elſe but every Mans poſſeſſing his own part, and the reſt quit the right which they had to it. *Moſes* therefore choſe the Princes of the Tribes, that after the Land and the Government was divided, every one might take care of his own part; that is, that the Prince of every Tribe, ſhould by the *High Prieſt* ask Council of God, concerning the Affairs of his own Tribe; that he ſhould command the Militia of his own Tribe; build and fortifie Cities; appoint Judges in every City; fight againſt the Enemies of his own Tribe, and have the abſolute Power of Peace and War within his own Tribe; nor was he obliged to acknowledge any other Judge over him, but God, or a Prophet whom God ſhould expreſly ſend; and if he departed from the Worſhip of God, the reſt of the Tribes were to account him no Subject, but fight againſt him as a publick Enemy, that had violated the Faith of the Covenant made with God; of which in

Scripture we have ſeveral Examples. When *Joſhua* was dead, the Children of *Iſrael*, without any new General, asked Counſel of God, and when they underſtood that the Tribe of *Juda* was firſt to aſſault the Enemy, *Juda* agreed only with his Brother *Simeon*, to go up with united Forces, and fight the Enemies of both their Lots; in which agreement none of the reſt of the Tribes were comprehended. (See *Judges* c. 1. v. 1, 2, 3.) But every Tribe, as that Chapter declares, fought ſeparately againſt its own particular Enemy, and ſpared the Lives of whom they pleaſed, though they were commanded upon no terms to ſpare any, but to extirpate all; for which Sin they were indeed reproved, but never called to account for it. When the Tribes made War one upon another, and medled with one anothers Affairs in aſſaulting the *Benjamites*, it was becauſe they had juſtly offended the reſt of the Tribes, by breaking the common Bond of Peace; ſo that none of their Confederates could ſafely venture themſelves amongſt them. This was the reaſon the reſt of the Tribes invaded the *Benjamites* in a hoſtile manner, and after the fighting of three ſeveral Battels having conquer'd them, by right of War put all Nocent and Innocent to the Sword,

Sword, which they afterward repented too late.

That which I have ſaid of the Power of every particular Tribe, is by theſe Examples confirm'd: But ſome body will perhaps ask, who choſe the Succeſſor of the Prince of every particular Tribe? I find nothing certain in Scripture concerning it, but ſeeing every Tribe was divided into Families, and the eldeſt were the Heads of every Family, I ſuppoſe of theſe Heads, the eldeſt did by Right ſucceed him that was Prince of theſe Seniors or Elders; *Moſes* choſe the Seventy that were to aſſiſt him, who with him, were the ſupreme Council, and after the Death of *Joſhua*, had the Adminiſtration of the Government. By Elders, often in Scripture, and amongſt the *Jews*, are meant Judges; but this particular not being much to our purpoſe, it is ſufficient that I have proved, no perſon after *Moſes*'s Death, executed all the Offices of Supreme Power; for ſince all things did not depend upon the pleaſure and will of one ſingle perſon, nor upon the Decrees of the Council or People, but ſome things were done by one Tribe, others by another, by the equal Power, and joynt Authority of every one; it evidently follows, that from the Death of *Moſes* the Government was nei-

ther Monarchical, Ariſtocratical or Popular, but, as I have ſaid, Theocratical: Firſt, becauſe the Temple was the Palace of the Government, and upon that account only all the Tribes were Fellow-Citizens. Secondly, Becauſe all the Citizens or Subjects, were to ſwear Fidelity and Allegiance to God their Supreme Judge, to whom only they promiſed to yield Obedience. And laſtly, Becauſe the Chief Commander, or General, when there was occaſion, was to be choſen by none but God, which *Moſes*, in the Name of God, expreſly propheſied to the People (*Deut.* 17. 15.) which likewiſe appears by the Election of *Gideon*, *Sampſon*, and *Samuel*; and therefore it is not to be doubted, but the reſt of their faithful Captains were choſen in the ſame manner, though it be not ſet down in their Hiſtory.

Theſe things being thus laid open, it is time to enquire, how this Conſtitution and form of Government, could ſo moderate the Minds, as well of thoſe who did govern, as of thoſe that were governed, that neither the Subjects ſhould become Rebels, nor the Governours Tyrants. They that have Supreme Power, or the Adminiſtration of Government, when they wickedly oppreſs and abuſe their

their Subjects, they ſtill endeavour to make the People believe, that all their Actions are juſt and legal, which may be eaſily done, when the Interpretation of the Law depends only upon them. 'Tis this that makes them take ſo much Liberty of doing what their Deſires dictate, and think much of their Prerogative loſt, when the power of interpreting the Laws is in any but themſelves; or when the Laws are ſo perſpicuouſly and clearly interpreted, that there can be no doubt or diſpute concerning them. The *Jews* therefore were very much ſecured againſt the Oppreſſion and Injuſtice of their Princes, by *Moſes* giving the power of interpreting the Laws to the *Levites*, (*Deut. chap.* 21. *v.* 15.) who had no adminiſtration or part in the Government with the reſt; but all their Honour and Fortune depended upon their truly and rightly interpreting the Law. Moreover, all the people were commanded once in every ſeven years, to aſſemble together in one place, where the *High Prieſt* read and expounded to them the Laws; and likewiſe every particular perſon was obliged, conſtantly, with great care, to read over the Book of the Law: (See *Deut. chap.* 21. *v* 9. and *chap.* 6. *v.* 7.) The Princes and Rulers therefore, for their own ſakes, were to take good heed,

heed, that they did all things according to the known Preſcription and Rules of the Law, if they expected any Honour from the People, who would then reverence them as God's Miniſters and Vicegerents; otherwiſe they muſt expect the Univerſal Hatred of the People, which was a ſort of Divine Vengeance. Another thing which very much bridled the Exorbitant Power and Luſt of their Princes, was their *Militia*'s being formed out of their own People, none from Twenty to Sixty excepted; it not being in the Prince's Power to levy, or keep in Pay any Forreign Forces. This, I ſay, was a thing of great Conſequence; for Princes cannot poſſibly oppreſs their Subjects, without Forces in continual Pay; and Princes fear nothing ſo much as the Power of their own armed Subjects, by whoſe Valour, Labour, and Expence of Blood, the Glory and Liberty of a Kingdom is purchaſt and ſecured. Therefore *Alexander*, when he was to fight a ſecond Battel againſt *Darius*, hearing *Parmenio* give Advice which did not pleaſe him, *Quintus Curtius*, in his Fourth Book, ſays, *Alexander* would not check *Parmenio* again, though he had upbraided *Alexander* more bitterly than was expedient, but fell upon *Polyperchon*, who was of *Parmenio*'s Opinion: Nor could

could *Alexander* oppreſs the Liberty of the *Macedonians*, which he moſt feared, till after he had, out of the Priſoners he took, formed Troops that out-numbred his own People; that being done, he did what he pleas'd, being before reſtrain'd by the Liberty which the beſt of his own Subjects enjoy'd: And if this Liberty of Armed Subjects in other Governments, be a Bridle to Princes, who aſcribe to themſelves the Glory of all Victories, it was certainly a much greater Curb to the Princes of the *Jewiſh* Tribes, whoſe Soldiers fought not for the Glory of their Prince, but the Glory of God, and ventur'd no Battles till they received an Anſwer from God. What is more to be obſerved, is, That all the Princes of the *Jews* were aſſociated and linked together by a Religious Covenant; ſo that if any one forſook the publick Religion, and offer'd to violate every man's Divine Right, they might juſtly account him a publick Enemy, and deſtroy him.

Thirdly, Another thing which kept the *Jewiſh* Princes within bounds, was the fear of a New Prophet; For if any man of an unblameable Life and Converſation, could by ſome certain ſigns, prove himſelf a Prophet, that Prophet had preſently Right to the ſupreme Power, in the

the ſame manner that *Moſes* himſelf had by Revelation; and not as the Princes who were to conſult God by the High Prieſt: and without doubt ſuch Prophets could eaſily make the Oppreſſed People of their Party, and by ſome little ſigns perſwade them to what they pleas'd: But when Juſtice was duely adminiſtred, the Prince could make ſuch timely proviſion, that the Prophet ſhould ſo far ſubmit to his Judgment, as to be ſtrictly examined, whether his Life and Converſation were good? Whether the ſigns of his Miſſion were true? And laſtly, Whether that which he propheſied in the Name of the Lord, were agreeable to the Religion and Laws of the Country? If the Signs he gave failed, or if his Doctrine were new, he might by the Authority of the Prince, be juſtly condemn'd, or elſe approved and received.

Fourthly, The Prince could not claim the Power of governing, upon the account of being more Nobly deſcended than others, but had Right to it only by Seniority of Age and Merit.

Laſtly, The Princes, and all the Army, had as much Reaſon to deſire Peace as War; for the *Militia* being compoſed only of *Jewiſh* Subjects, the ſame perſons that were Soldiers, managed Affairs in

times of Peace; he that was a Commander in the Field, was in the Tribunal a Judge; and he that was a General in the Camp, was a Prince in the City: Therefore none could desire War for Wars sake, but only to enjoy Peace, and to defend their Subjects Liberties. Perhaps the Prince abstain'd, as much as was possible, from Innovations, that he might not attend, and wait on the High Priest, which he might think beneath his Dignity.

So much for the Reasons which kept the Princes within bounds. Let us now see what kept the People to their Duty. The Principles of the Government will make this clear; for whosoever considers them, will find, they begot so much Affection in the Hearts of the People, that it was impossible any man should think of betraying or deserting his Countrey; but must be so much affected with it, that he would suffer any Extremities, rather than be subject to any other Forreign Government: For after they transferr'd their Power upon God, acknowledging their Kingdom to be the Kingdom of God, and believed they only were the Children of God, and all other Nations God's Enemies, believing their mortal Hatred against them to be Piety: (See *Psal.* 139. *v.* 21,

v. 21, 22.) They could abhor nothing more, than ſwearing Fidelity, and promiſing Obedience to Strangers; nor could any thing be thought ſo execrable and abominable, as betraying their Countrey; (that is) the Kingdom of that God they worſhip'd. It was counted an horrible Offence to go out of their Countrey to live, becauſe they would not celebrate the Worſhip of God, to which they were ſtrictly obliged, any where but in their own Land, which was therefore called, *the Holy Land*, and every part of the Earth beſide, eſteemed by them profane and unclean. Therefore *David*, being forced by *Saul* to fly his Country, complains in theſe words, (1 *Sam. chap.* 26. *v.* 19.) *If they be the children of men that have ſtirred thee up againſt me, curſed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, ſaying, go ſerve other Gods.* This was the Reaſon (which is very worthy Obſervation) that no *Jewiſh* Subject was ever condemn'd to Baniſhment; He that ſins deſerves to be puniſh't, but his puniſhment oughr not to be a ſin. The Affection which the *Jews* had for their Countrey, was not ſimply Love, but Piety, which, with their Hatred to other Nations, was ſo augment-

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ed by their daily Worſhip, that it became natural to them; for their daily Worſhip was not only different from, but abſolutely contrary to that of all other Nations, and was the Reaſon they did not only live unmixt, but ſeparate from them. Continual Reproach muſt neceſſarily beget perpetual Hatred, and there is no Hatred ſo great and laſting, as that which is grounded upon difference in Religion, and is believed to be pious: There was no Reaſon why their Hatred ſhould decreaſe; for all other Nations did as mortally hate them.

Let Reaſon and Experience judge then, whether the Liberty of the Subject, Devotion towards their Countrey, Abſolute Power over all Nations, againſt whom their Hatred was not only counted lawful, but pious; Singularity of Religious Rites, and manner of living, were not powerful Arguments to perſwade the *Jews*, with great Courage and Conſtancy of Mind, to ſuffer any thing for their Countrey? For while *Jeruſalem* ſtood, they would never endure any other Government; therefore was it called, *the Rebellious City*, (*Ezra chap.* 4. *v.* 12, 15.) The ſecond Government (which was ſcarce a ſhadow of the firſt, after the *Prieſts* had uſurped the Power of the

the *Princes*) was with great difficulty deſtroyed by the *Romans*, as *Tacitus* tells us, in the ſecond Book of his Hiſtory: *Veſpaſian*, ſaith he, *put an end to the Jewiſh War, by the taking of the City* Jeruſalem, *an hard and difficult work, becauſe of the Peoples Diſpoſition and Obſtinacy in their Superſtition, and becauſe the beſieged had Courage and Strength enough to ſuffer all Extremities.* Beſide all theſe things, which only Opinion made dear and valuable, there was another thing in this Government, which was a ſingular and ſolid Argument to continue the People in their Obedience, and take from them all thoughts of deſerting their Countrey; and that was *Profit*, which is the Strength and Life of all Humane Actions. In this Particular, their Advantages were very conſiderable; for Subjects had no where greater Right to any thing they poſſeſt. The *Jewiſh* Subjects had an equal portion of Land and Fields with the Prince; and every one was an eternal Lord of his part; for if any man, forced by poverty, ſold his Land, when the Year of *Jubilee* came, it was to be intirely reſtored. There were likewiſe other Inſtitutions of this kind; ſo that a fixed Eſtate could never be perpetually alienated: Where could poverty be more tole-

tolerable, than in a Country where every man's mutual Charity, was that part of his Religion whereby he hoped to purchaſe the Favour of God, who was his King: ſo that the *Jews* could never live well in any Country but their own, and out of it were ſure to meet with Injury and Reproach. To keep them in their own Country from Civil War, and to take away the Cauſes of Contention, their being ſubject to no Equal, but only to God himſelf, contributed very much: ſo likewiſe did their mutual Love and Charity, which was not a little increaſed by the general Hatred all other Nations had againſt them. Another thing, which beyond all that I have mentioned, much contributed to keeping the people within the Limits of their Duty, was that ſtrict Diſcipline of Obedience under which they were educated; for they were to do nothing but according to poſitive preſcriptions of Law; they could not when they pleas'd, but only at certain times, and in certain Years plow, and that but with one ſort of Cattel; they had likewiſe preſcribed Rules for ſowing and reaping; and indeed (as we have ſhewn in the Fifth Chapter, concerning the Uſe of Ceremonies) their whole courſe of Life was

but a continual practice of Obedience, ſo that being accuſtomed to it, it ſeemed rather Liberty than Servitude. This was the Reaſon they deſired not what was forbidden, but that which was commanded. At certain times of the Year they were to give themſelves up to Mirth, Pleaſure and Eaſe; not to indulge their own Appetites, but to ſerve God the more chearfully: Thrice in a Year they were God's Gueſts, (ſee *Deut. chap.* 16. *v.* 16.) Every Seventh day of the Week they were to ceaſe from all kind of Labour, and take their reſt; at other ſet times, rejoicing; honeſt Recreations and Feaſting, were not only allow'd, but commanded, which above all things prevail upon mens Minds, eſpecially that Joy which ariſeth from Devotion, (that is) from Love and admiration together. Their Worſhip preſcribed on Feſtival Days being ſhort and various, kept them from loathing and wearineſs. To all this add the high Reverence and Veneration they had for the Temple, which was ſtill preſerved by the particular Worſhip they were to perform in it, and by many things they were to obſerve and do, before it was lawful for any one to enter into it: So that even now we cannot without great horror, read that abominable

nable wicked act of *Manaſſeh*, who cauſed an Idol to be ſet up in the Temple. Nor was the Reverence much leſs which the People had for the Law, which was religiouſly kept in the Sanctuary; ſo that no Rumors or Diſcontents among the People were here to be feared; for no body could meddle or paſs any Judgment in matters of Religion, but every man, without conſulting Reaſon, was to do all things which God by his Anſwers in the Temple, or by the Laws already given, commanded them. It now then appears under what manner of Government the *Jews* lived, of which, I hope, I have given a very clear, though but brief Account.

It now remains, that we enquire, *Why the Jews did ſo often forſake the Law, why they were ſo often conquer'd, and why at laſt their Government was totally deſtroyed.* Perhaps ſome will tell me, Their ſtubborn and rebellious Humour was the Cauſe; That's but a childiſh and frivolous Anſwer: Why was this Nation more rebellious than any other, was it their Natures? Nature doth not make Nations, but only individual Perſons, who are diſtinguiſh't and divided into Nations, by diverſity of Language, Laws and Cuſtoms: From

Laws and Cuſtoms every Nation acquires a particular Diſpoſition, a particular Condition, and peculiar Prejudices and Opinions. If it muſt be granted, That the *Jews* were more ſtiff-necked and rebellious than any other Nation, it muſt be becauſe they had Bad Laws and Evil Cuſtoms; and it is a certain Truth, That if God had decreed their Government ſhould have had a longer continuance, he would have given them other Laws and Statutes, and another Adminiſtration of Government. Therefore what can we ſay more, than that God was offended and angry with them, not only as *Jeremy* ſaith, from the building of their City, (*Jerem. chap.* 32. *v.* 31.) but from the very time he gave them their Laws, which *Ezekiel* teſtifies, (*chap.* 20. *v.* 25.) ſaying, *I gave them ſtatutes which were not good, and judgments whereby they ſhould not live, and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they cauſed to paſs through the fire all that openeth the womb, that is, the firſt-born, that I might make them deſolate, to the end, that they might know I am the Lord.* That theſe Words, and the Cauſe of their Deſtruction may be rightly underſtood, we are to take notice, That God's firſt Intention was to commit the Adminiſtration

tion of all things pertaining to Religion, to the First-born; not to the *Levites*, as appears, (*Numb. chap.* 8. *v.* 17.) where God says, *all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, I sanctified them for my self.* But after all the People, the *Levites* only excepted, had worshipped the *Golden Calf*, they were defiled and rejected, and the *Levites* who sided with *Moses*, as appears, (*Exod. chap.* 32. *v.* 20, 27.) were chosen into their room: (*Deut. chap.* 10. *v.* 8.) *The Lord separated the tribe of Levi to stand before the Lord, to minister to him, and to bless his Name.* Which change, when I seriously consider, it makes me think of those Words in *Tacitus: Illo tempore non fuisse Deo curæ securitatem illorum, fuisse ultionem: At that time God took more care to be revenged upon them, than to preserve them.* God was so extreamly incensed against them, that though Laws usually provide for the Safety, Honour and Security of People, yet the Laws which God gave the *Jews*, were with a purpose to punish, and be revenged upon them: so that their Laws were not Laws; that is, the Peoples Safety, but their Plague and Pnnishment. Consider how many things the People were bound to give to the *Priests* and

Levites, beſide the Money that was to be pay'd for the Redemption of the Firſt-born: Conſider likewiſe, that the *Levites* were only permitted to come near whatever was accounted holy, which continually minded the People of their Uncleanneſs and Repudiation; with which 'tis very likely the *Levites* might often reproach them: for amongſt ſo many thouſand *Levites*, no queſtion but there were ſome troubleſome pragmatical Fellows, who provoked the People; and the People on their part, to be quit with the *Levites*, narrowly watched and pryed into their Actions, who being but Men, were ſubject to many failings and miſcarriages, which, as is uſual, were charged upon the whole Function, and at laſt, eſpecially when Proviſions were dear, in all probability, the People grew weary of maintaining ſo many lazy, idle and hated perſons, who were no Kin at all to them. No wonder then when the People were at eaſe, and publick Miracles ceaſed, if they who were in Authority became remiſs, and the covetous incenſed Minds of the People grew careleſs, and neglecting the Divine Worſhip, of which they began to be ſuſpicious and aſhamed, deſired a new. 'Tis likewiſe poſſible, that the Princes to keep the Commanding Power

Power ſtill in their own hands, might court the People to take part with them againſt the Prieſt, and bring in a new Religion. But had the duration and ſecurity of the Government been deſigned when it was firſt inſtituted, things might have gone well, if all the Tribes had had equal Honour and Power; for who would have violated the Sacred Right of his Kindred? They would rather for Piety and Religion's ſake, have maintained their Parents, Brothers, and Kinſmen, ſeeing from them they were to receive the Interpretation of the Law, and the Divine Oracles. The Tribes would have been tied in a ſtricter Bond of Amity, if all had had equal Power of adminiſtring in the Temple; at leaſt, there had been leſs fear of Diſcord, if the Election of the *Levites* had not been grounded upon the Wrath and Vengeance of God: But, as I have already ſaid, God was very angry with them, and that I may again uſe *Ezekiel*'s Expreſſion, *he polluted them with their gifts, in the redemption of their firſt-born, that he might deſtroy them.* This appears by their Hiſtories; for as ſoon as the People began to be idle in the Wilderneſs, many, not of the meaneſt ſort, began to be offended with the Choice of this Tribe, believing that *Moſes*

ſes did not act by God's Command, but did all things as he himſelf pleaſed; becauſe he made choice of his own Tribe above all the reſt, and made a perpetual Settlement of the Prieſthood upon his own Brother: So that a Tumult being rais'd, they tell *Moſes* and *Aaron*, that all the Congregation were every one of them holy, and that they lifted themſelves up above all the Congregation of the Lord. No Reaſon could appeaſe them, but they were all miraculouſly deſtroy'd, which occaſion'd a Univerſal Sedition amongſt all the People, who believed that they who periſhed were not deſtroyed by God's Judgment, but by ſome Trick of *Moſes*; after which followed a great Plague, which made the People weary of their Lives. This was the end of the Sedition, but not the beginning of any Amity or Affection; and God told *Moſes* (*Deut. chap.* 33. *v.* 21.) *that he knew the imagination the people went about, even before he had brought them into the Land which he ſware:* and *Moſes* a little after, *Verſe* 27. ſaith to the People, *I know thy rebellion, and thy ſtiff neck; behold while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious againſt the Lord, and how much more after my death?* And, as all the World knows, ſo it happened; great

Changes,

Changes, all manner of Licentiouſneſs, Luxury and Idleneſs, made them grow daily worſe and worſe, till being often beaten by their Enemies, they brake their Holy Covenant, and deſired a Mortal King. The Temple became his Palace, and the Tribes caſting off the Divine Law and the Prieſthood, his Subjects. The Electing of a King was a great occaſion of new Seditions, to reign precariouſly, or ſuffer any Power to controll theirs, was intolerable to their Kings: They who from private Men were elected to the Throne, were contented with the Dignity conferr'd upon them; but when their Sons came by Right of Succeſſion to the Crown, they began by degrees to make Alterations, that the Supreme Power might reſide only in them; which Power they had not, ſo long as the Power of the Laws was not in their hands, but were interpreted and kept by the *High Prieſt* in the Sanctuary. So that the Kings were ſtill ſubject to the Laws, and had not Authority enough to abrogate the Old, or make New. Moreover, the *Levites* had power to keep the Kings, as well as the Subjects, under the Notion of being profane perſons, from medling with Sacred Matters. Laſtly, Becauſe all the power of their

their Kings depended upon the pleaſure of any one who was accounted a *Prophet*; of which they had an Example in *Samuel*, who with great Boldneſs and Liberty commanded *Saul* to do what he pleas'd, and for one Offence only transferr'd the Kingdom upon *David*, which indeed made the Government perfectly precarious. To avoid this, their Kings conſecrated other Temples, that they might have no more need of conſulting the *Levites*, and enquired after others to propheſie, in oppoſition to thoſe who were accounted *true Prophets:* But yet they could never compaſs their Ends; for the *Prophets* were ſtill ready, watching their opportunity till a Succeſſor came, and then the *Prophets*, by their Divine Power, did ſometimes ſet up ſome Famous and Worthy Perſon, who being diſpleas'd with the King, did, under pretence of vindicating Religion, endeavour to uſurp the Supreme Power, or ſome part thereof. But neither this way could the *Prophets* compaſs their Ends; for though they took away the Tyrant, yet the Cauſes of Tyranny ſtill remain'd, and they did, with a great Effuſion of the Subjects Blood, only purchaſe another new Tyrant. So that there was no end of their Diſcords and

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Inteſtine Wars; and the Cauſes of violating God's Law, were ſtill the ſame; which could never end but with the Total Deſtruction of the Common-Wealth.

We have now ſeen how Religion began in the *Jewiſh* Common-Wealth, and how the Government might have been perpetual, if the Juſt Wrath of God would have permitted it to continue; But becauſe it would not, therefore it periſhed. I have here ſpoken only of their Firſt Government, the Second being but a Shadow of their Firſt, ſeeing they were ſtill under the Power of the *Perſians*. After they obtained their Liberty of *Cyrus*, the *High Prieſts* became their Princes, by uſurping the Supreme Authority; the *Prieſts* having as great a Mind to the Crown as to the Mitre. Of this Second Government I need ſay no more. Whether their Firſt Government, as it was conceived Durable, or Religious, be a Pattern that may be followed, will appear in the next Chapter.

For the Cloſe of all, I deſire it may be particularly obſerved, That by what hath been declared in this Chapter, it

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is evident, That Divine Right or Religion, had its Beginning and Riſe from a Covenant or Contract; without which there is no Right but that of Nature; and therefore the *Jews* were not obliged by any Precept of Religion, to ſhew any Kindneſs towards any other Nations, who were not concerned in the Covenant, but only to thoſe of their own Common-Wealth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Certain Political Maxims Collected from the Government and Hiſtories of the Jews *Commonwealth.*

THough the Government of the Jews, as it hath been deſcrib'd in the preceding Chapter, might have been perpetual; yet 'tis an Example that cannot now be follow'd, nor is it adviſable to put it in practice; for if any Men would transfer their power upon God, they ought to do it as the Jews did, by an expreſs Contract or Covenant; ſo that not only the mind of them that transfer their power, but alſo the Will of God, upon whom the power is transfer'd ought to be known; but God hath revealed by the Apoſtles, that the Covenant of God ſhall no more be written with Ink, nor in Tables of Stone, but ſhall by his Spirit be written in our Hearts. That form of Government, under which the Jews lived, might be very uſeful and convenient for them

them who lived alone, without any foreign Trade or Commerce, who kept themſelves within their own Territories, and ſeparated themſelves from all the reſt of the World; but 'tis in no wiſe fit for People that live by trading with others, and conſequently it is to very few people that the Jewiſh government can be of any uſe or advantage; but though it be a pattern that cannot be follow'd in all things, yet there were in it many things very worthy of our obſervation, and which are fit to be put in practice. Becauſe my intention is not to treat expreſly of Government, I will paſs many things by, and only take notice of thoſe that make for my purpoſe; Namely, *That it is not repugnant to the Kingdom of God, to make Majeſty Elective*; that is, to chuſe the Perſon or Perſons who ſhall have the Supream Power of Government; for after the *Jews* transferr'd their Power upon God, they delivered the Supream Power of Governing to *Moſes*, who thereby had in God's Name, the ſole Authority of making and abrogating Laws, of chuſing ſacred Miniſters, and likewiſe the ſole power of teaching, judging, and puniſhing: and though the *Prieſts* were Interpreters of the Law, yet they had no power at all to judge the People,

nor

nor to excommunicate any perſon; for none could do that but the Judges and Princes, who were choſen out of the People, as appears (*Joſhua chap. 6. v.* 26.) where *Joſhua* adjured the people, not to rebuild *Jericho*; (*Judges chap.* 21. *v.* 18.) where the Elders of the Congregation appointed what Women the *Benjamites* ſhould marry, to propagate their Tribe, and (1 *Sam. chap.* 14. *v.* 24.) where *Saul* commanded the People not to eat any food till Evening. If we conſider the Hiſtories and Succeſſes of the *Jews*, we ſhall find other things very well worth our Obſervation:

Firſt, That there were no different Sects of Religion amongſt them, till after the Prieſts in the Second Government uſurped the Supream Authority, and the Power of making Laws. To make their Authority laſting, they took upon them the Power which the Princes had, and at laſt, would be called Kings. The Reaſon is apparent; for in the Firſt Government, nothing was made Law by the *High Prieſt*, becauſe he had no power of decreeing any thing; his Buſineſs was only to return thoſe Anſwers to the Princes and Council, which were given by God: So that at that time, their

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High Prieſts could not deſire to make new Decrees, but only to do that which was their known Duty; for they had no other way to preſerve their Liberty againſt the Princes, but by keeping the Laws free from Violation and Corruption; but after the *Prieſts* got power of medling with matters of Government, and of *Prieſts* became *Princes*, then every one, as well in Religion as other Affairs, would have all things determin'd by the Pontifical Authority, daily making Decrees, which they would have to be as Sacred as the Laws of *Moſes*; ſo that Religion degenerated into horrible Superſtition; the true Senſe and Interpretation of the Law was corrupted, and the *Prieſts*, after the Reſtauration, attempting to get the Supream Power into their hands, to gain the People, ſo ſoothed and flatter'd them, that they approved of all they did, were it never ſo wicked, and made Interpretations of Scripture ſuitable to their Humours and Practices, which *Malachy* in expreſs Words teſtifies, reproving the *Prieſts* of his own time in this manner, (*Mal. chap. 2. v. 7, 8.*) *The Prieſt's lips ſhould preſerve knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth; for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts: But ye are departed out of*

of the way, ye have cauſed many to ſtumble at the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. And ſo goes on in reproaching them with interpreting the Law as they pleaſed, with their reſpecting of perſons, and taking no heed to walk in God's ways. It is certain, that though the *Prieſts* were never ſo cautious and wary, yet they were narrowly obſerved by the wiſer ſort, who taking notice of the *Prieſts* Boldneſs, declared, That the People were not bound to the Obſervation of any Laws, but thoſe that were Written, and that all Decrees made by the Prieſts, which the deceived *Phariſees* (choſen, as *Joſephus* tells us, out of the meaneſt of the People) called, *the Tradition of their Fathers*, were not at all obligatory, nor to be obey'd. Without all doubt, the High Prieſt's flattering the People, the Corruption of Religion, and the Multiplication of Laws, became a great occaſion of thoſe Diſputes and Controverſies which could never be ended; for when men in the heat of Superſtition begin to quarrel, and ſupreme Magiſtrates on one ſide or other, concern themſelves in the Diſpute, the Controverſie never ends, and there is a neceſſity of dividing into Sects.

In the *Second* place, it may be obſerved, *That the Prophets, who were but private perſons, ſometimes by the great Liberty they uſed, in admoniſhing, reproving, and reproaching the People, did rather provoke than make them better, who notwithſtanding, would with much greater patience, receive correction and inſtruction from their Kings.* Yea, the Prophets were ſometimes intolerable to very pious good Kings, by arrogating a Power of judging what was well, and what ill done, and ſometimes by reproving Kings to their faces, if they ſuffer'd any thing to be publickly or privately done, which was contrary to their Judgment. *Aſa*, who was by the Teſtimony of Scripture, a good King, impriſon'd *Hanani* the Prophet, (ſee 2 *Chron. chap.* 16.) for too boldly reproving and reproaching him, for the League he made with the King of *Syria.* Beſide this Example, there are others, which ſhew, That the Liberty the Prophets took, did ſometimes more hurt than good; I need not inſtance the Civil Wars, which were occaſioned by the Prophets pretending to the Supream Power.

A *Third* thing fit to be obſerved, is, *That during the time the People governed, there happened but one Civil War, which being*

being ended, the Victors had ſo much compaſſion for the Conquer'd Party, that their whole care and ſtudy, was, how to reſtore them to their former Power and Dignity. But after the People, not accuſtomed to Kings, had changed the Form of their Government into Monarchy, there was no end of their Civil Wars; they fought ſuch fierce and bloody Battels, as almoſt exceed Belief; for in one Battel (which is hardly credible) Fifty Thouſand *Iſraelites* were ſlain by the men of *Judah*, and in another, the *Iſraelites* ſlew a very great number, though not ſpecified of the men of *Judah*, took the King himſelf Priſoner, demoliſh'd a great part of the Walls of *Jeruſalem*; and, to ſhew, that the Rage of War hath no Moderation, they deſtroy'd the Temple, ſack't the City, laden and glutted with the Spoils and Blood of their Brethren, taking Hoſtages, they leave the King in his almoſt ruin'd Kingdom, and more ſecured by the Weakneſs, than the Faith of the King of *Judah*'s Subjects, laid down their Arms. The men of *Judah* in a few years after, recovering ſtrength, come again into the Field, and fight another Battel, wherein the *Iſraelites* were again Victors, killing an Hundred and Twenty Thouſand of the Men of *Judah*, and

carried away Captives Two Hundred Thouſand of their Wives and Children, with a very great Booty; ſo that conſumed by theſe and other Battels, mention'd in Scripture, they at laſt fell a prey to their Enemies. Before they had Kings, they ſometimes lived in perfect peace Forty Years together; and once, which is ſcarce credible, Fourſcore Years without any Forreign or Domeſtick War; but after they were governed by Kings, and fought not for Peace and Liberty, but the Glory of their Monarch, we find them continually embroil'd, the Reign of *Solomon* only excepted, whoſe Wiſdom and Vertue better appear'd in Peace than in War; the deſire of reigning at laſt became ſo exceſſive, that their Kings ſometimes waded to the Throne in Blood.

Laſtly, During the Government of the People, the Laws remain'd in their firſt purity, and were conſtantly obſerved; for before Kings came in, there were very few Prophets; but after the Election of Kings, the Prophets grew very numerous. We read, *Obadiah* hid at one time an Hundred in a Cave, to ſave their Lives. We likewiſe find, the People were often deceived with Falſe Prophets; the People, before Kings had the Government, be-

being as there was occaſion, ſometimes haughty, and ſometimes humble, did, when they were in Calamity, forſake their evil ways, ſought God, reſtored the Laws, and by theſe means freed themſelves from danger and diſtreſs; but their Kings, whoſe haughty Minds cannot without ſhame ſtoop, obſtinately perſiſted in their Sins and Vices, till the Commonwealth was utterly deſtroyed.

By all this it clearly appears, *Firſt*, How dangerous it is both to Religion and Government, to put the Power of making Laws and governing, into the hands of Prieſts, and that it is much ſafer to reſtrain them from medling in any Buſineſs, till their Counſel be ask'd, and to keep them from preaching and teaching New Doctrines and Opinions.

Secondly, It is very dangerous to judge and determine of things meerly ſpeculative by Scripture, or to make any Laws concerning Opinions, which are, or may be in themſelves diſputable. That Government is very Tyrannical, where Opinions are counted Crimes; 'tis a ſign the angry Multitude are Maſters. *Pilate*, to gratifie the incenſed *Phariſees*, commanded Chriſt to be crucified: It was uſual with the *Phariſees*, when they had a

mind to put Worthy Perſons out of their Places, and Offices of Dignity, to ask Queſtions concerning Religion; this made them accuſe the *Sadduces* of Impiety. According to the Example of the *Phariſees*, , baſe and abominable Hypocrites, under pretence of Zeal for Religion, perſecute and traduce honeſt worthy vertuous men, whom for that Reaſon they envy, and by publickly inveighing againſt their Opinions, ſtir up the People againſt their Perſons. This unworthy Practice, becauſe it is cloaked with Religion, can hardly be reſtrained, where the Supreme Powers have introduced any Sect whereof they themſelves were not Authors; for then the Sectaries, not the Supream Powers, are accounted Interpreters of the Divine Law; that is, the Supream Power makes Sectaries Interpreters of Scripture, and then the Magiſtrates Authority ſignifies little with the People, who have great Veneration for their Teachers, to whoſe Doctrine and Deciſions they think even Kings ought to ſubmit. To avoid all theſe Miſchiefs, nothing can be ſafer for a Commonwealth, than to place all Religion and Piety only in Works; that is, only in the Exerciſe of Juſtice and Charity; and for Matters of Opinion, to

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leave every Man free to his own Judgment. But of this Particular more largely hereafter.

Thirdly, We ſee how neceſſary it is, for the good both of Religion and Government, to fix the Right and Authority of determining even in things pertaining to God and Religion, and of judging what is right and what is wrong, in the Supream Powers; for if the power of judging Mens Actions, could not without great danger to Religion and Government, be allow'd to the Prophets, much leſs ought it to be granted to Men, who can neither propheſie or do Miracles. But of this Particular I will ſpeak expreſly in the next Chapter.

Fourthly, and laſtly, We ſee how dangerous it is, for People never accuſtomed to Kingly Government, and have Laws accordingly framed, to chuſe a Monarch; for as the People cannot endure ſuch a Government, ſo Kingly Authority cannot brook Laws, or any Rights and Priviledges of the People, Eſtabliſh't by any others of leſs Authority; and a King will have very little mind to maintain Laws, wherein the Peoples Intereſt was more intended and provided for than his own: for in main-

taining ſuch Laws, he will think himſelf rather the Peoples Servant than their Maſter. A New Monarch will make it his buſineſs to make New Laws, framing the Rules of Government to his own purpoſe, and will reduce the People to ſuch a Condition, that they ſhall not be able, with as much eaſe, to unmake as make a King. But here I cannot paſs by another Obſervation, which is, *That it is a very dangerous thing to take away the Life of a King, though it be evident to all the World he is an Abſolute Tyrant*; Becauſe when a Nation is accuſtomed to Kingly Authority, and hath been governed only by it, they will ſcorn and contemn any Authority that is leſs; and when they have taken away one Tyrant, they will be neceſſitated as heretofore the *Prophets* were, to chuſe another in his room, who muſt be a Tyrant whether he will or no; for how can he behold his Subjects Hands ſtain'd with Royal Blood, and approve the Fact, which was but a preſident, to ſhew how they might likewiſe deal with him? If he will be a King, and will have the People acknowledge his Power, and not be his Judge, he muſt, unleſs he intend to reign precariouſly, firſt revenge the Death of his Predeceſſor, and make the

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People an Example, that they may not dare to commit the like Parricide upon him. But how can he revenge upon the People the Death of a Tyrant, unleſs he firſt defend the former Tyrant's Cauſe, approve his Actions, and conſequently tread in his ſteps? Hence it comes to paſs, that people may indeed change, but never deſtroy a Tyrant, or turn ancient Monarchical Government into any other form. Of this the People of a Kingdom not far from us, have given the World a fatal Example, who under colour and form of Law and Juſtice, took away their King's Life; and when he was gone, they could do no leſs than change the form of Government; but after much Blood ſpilt, it came to this paſs at laſt, that another perſon was ſet up, not by the Name of *King* (as if all the Quarrel had been for nothing but a Name,) who could not poſſibly ſtand, unleſs he deſtroyed the Royal Line, and all that were ſuſpected to be the laſt King's Friends: He diſturb'd the Quiet of Peace, which breeds Rumors, with new Wars, that thereby he might divert the Minds of the People from reflecting upon the King's Murder; but the Nation at laſt finding they had done nothing for the publick good, by putting to Death their

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Lawful King, and by changing the Government, had brought themſelves into a Condition worſe than they were in before, they reſolved to return from whence they had ſtrayed; nor were they quiet till they ſaw all things reſtor'd to their former ſtate. Perhaps ſome will object the Example of the People of *Rome*, who with much eaſe rid themſelves of a Tyrant; but their Example, I think, makes good my Opinion; for though the People of *Rome* could eaſily deſtroy a Tyrant, and change their form of Government, becauſe the Power and Right of chuſing a King and his Succeſſor, was in the People; and becauſe the People (amongſt whom were many criminal and ſeditious perſons) were not accuſtomed to Kings, for of Six they kill'd Three, yet ſtill they did nothing, but in the place of one Tyrant chuſe many, who kept them always embroil'd in Foreign and Civil War, till the Government, under another Name, as it did lately in *England*, fell again to a Monarch; but the States of *Holland* never, that we know, had Kings, but only Earls or Counts, upon whom the *Supream Power* was devolved: for the States, by their Declaration publiſht in the time of the Earl of *Leiceſter*, make it evident, That they ſtill reſerved to themſelves

ſelves the Power and Authority of minding thoſe Counts of their Duty, and likewiſe kept continually in their own hands the power of maintaining their own Authority, and defending their Subjects Liberty; in caſe thoſe Counts did at any time abuſe their power, the States had ſtill Authority to reſtrain and puniſh them, that they could do nothing without their Conſent and Approbation. Whence it clearly follows, that the Right of Supream Power and Majeſty always reſided in the States, which Power the laſt Earl endeavouring to uſurp, the States could not poſſibly be thought guilty of any Revolt or Rebellion, when they did only reſtore their almoſt loſt Government to its Priſtine State: Theſe Examples fully prove, That ancient Forms of Government ought to be preſerved, and cannot, without great danger of total ruine, be changed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Religion, and all things pertaining to it, are ſubject to no other Power, but that of the Supream Magiſtrate. Publick External Forms of Religious Worſhip, ought to be accommodated to the Peace of the Commonwealth.

WHen I ſaid, That they only who have the Supream Power, have Right to all things, and that all things depend upon their Decrees, I meant things Sacred as well as Civil; that is, Supream Magiſtrates are the Supream Heads, Judges, and Interpreters of all things both in Church and State, which is the particular Point I intended to treat of in this Chapter, becauſe there are many, who will not allow Supream Civil Magiſtrates to have any power over things Sacred, nor will they own them to be Judges or Interpreters of God's Law, but with ſtrange Boldneſs accuſe and traduce them; yea,

yea, ſometimes (as heretofore *Ambroſe* did the Emperor *Theodoſius*) Excommunicate them out of the Church. But, as it will appear in the end of this Chapter, theſe Men have a mind to divide and ſhare the Government, or get it wholly into their own hands.

I will firſt ſhew, *That Religion hath the Force of a Law, only from their Decrees who have the Supream Power; and that all External Religious Worſhip, and Outward Practice of Piety, ought to be ſuited and accommodated to the Peace of the Commonwealth*; (That is) ſo ordered and regulated, as may make moſt for the Quiet thereof, and conſequently ought to be determin'd and ſettled by the *Supream Power*, to whoſe Judgment in all Cauſes, Sacred and Civil, we ought to ſubmit. But that I may not be miſtaken, I ſpeak only of the outward Worſhip and Exerciſe of Religion and Piety, and not of Piety it ſelf, and the inward Worſhip of God, or of the Means whereby the Mind is internally diſpoſed to worſhip God in ſincerity: for the inward Worſhip of God, and Piety it ſelf, is in every man's own power, (as we have ſhewn in the end of the Seventh Chapter) which power no man can transfer upon another. It appears by the Fourteenth Chapter, what I mean by the Kingdom

dom of God, where I ſhew, That he fulfilleth the Law of God, who exerciſeth Juſtice and Charity, becauſe God hath commanded it; from whence it follows, That the Kingdom of God, is where Juſtice and Charity have the force of a Law and Precept. I think there is little difference, whether God teach us the Practice of Juſtice and Charity by Natural Light, or by Revelation, or whether God command it; for it matters not how it was revealed, ſo as it obtain the Force of a Law, and become in the higheſt Degree obligatory to Men. If I then prove, That Juſtice and Charity cannot become a Law or Command, but by the Power and Command of the Supream Powers, it will be eaſily granted (ſeeing Supream Power is always in the hands of the Supream Magiſtrates,) that Religion becomes a binding Law, only by their Decrees, who have the Power of Government, and that God hath no peculiar Kingdom over Men, but by them who have the Supream Ruling Power. That the outward Practice of Juſtice and Charity becomes an obligatory Law by the Command of the Supream governing Power, appears by what I have ſaid in the Fourteenth Chapter, where I have declared, That in the State of Nature, Reaſon cannot pretend to any greater

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er power than Natural Appetite may; and that they who live according to the Laws and Dictates of Natural Appetite, have as much Right to all things within their Power, as they that live according to the Rules of Reaſon: So that for this very Reaſon we cannot conceive, there can be in the State of Nature any ſin, nor can we think God to be a Judge puniſhing ſins, but all things carried on in their courſe, according to the Laws of Univerſal Nature; to uſe *Solomon*'s own Words, *all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean*, no place being left for Juſtice and Charity. But that the Dictates of Reaſon (that is, as I have ſhew'd in the Fourteenth Chapter,) the Divine Law written in our hearts, might obtain the ſtrength and force of a Law, it was neceſſary, that every man ſhould part from his Natural Right, and transfer it either upon all, upon ſome, or upon one; and that then we firſt came to know what was Juſtice and what Injuſtice, what Equity and what Iniquity: Juſtice therefore, and the Dictates of Right Reaſon, with Love to our Neighbour, becomes a Precept and obligatory Law, by the Power and Decrees of Supream Magiſtrates; and becauſe, as I have ſhew'd, the Kingdom

dom of God conſiſts in the power that Juſtice, Charity, and true Religion have over us, by becoming a Law to us; therefore it follows, that God hath no peculiar Kingdom over Men, but by thoſe who have the Supream Ruling Power. Whether we conſider Religion revealed to us by natural or prophetical Light, the Demonſtration is Univerſal, ſeeing Religion is the ſame, and equally revealed by God, which way ſoever it be ſuppoſed to come to our knowledge; and therefore that Religion prophetically revealed, might obtain the force of a Law among the *Jews*, it was neceſſary every man ſhould firſt part with his natural Right, and that all with one common conſent, ſhould reſolve to obey and ſubmit to all things which ſhould by God be prophetically revealed to them; juſt as People do in Democratical Government, where all with common conſent reſolve to live according to the Dictates of Reaſon; and though the *Jews* did transfer their Power upon God, yet they did it more in opinion than reality; for the Supream Power really and abſolutely remained ſtill in them till they transferr'd it upon *Moſes*; who was thenceforward an abſolute King, and by him only God reigned over the *Jews*. Moreover, becauſe Religion became a Law only

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ly by the Power of the Supream Government, *Moſes* could puniſh none before the Covenant was made, becauſe then no man had parted with his own Power and Right. They broke the Sabbath before the Covenant was made, and were not puniſhed, as appears (*Exod. chap. v.* 27.) but after the Covenant, when every man had parted with his Natural Right, he that broke the Sabbath only by gathering ſticks, was ſtoned, as appears (*Numb. chap.* 15. *v.* 36.) and the obſervation of the Sabbath when the People had parted with their Power, became a Law by the Command of the Supream Magiſtrate. *Laſtly*, Upon this very ground alſo, when the Commonwealth and Government of the *Jews* was deſtroyed, Revealed Religion had no longer the Force of a Law; for without doubt, as ſoon as the *Jews* transferr'd their Power upon the King of *Babylon*, the Covenant of the Kingdom of God, and the Obligation of the Divine Law ceaſed; for as ſoon as they were Subjects to the King of *Babylon*, the Covenant whereby they promiſed to obey God in all things became void, and they could no longer perform it: From the time they were ſubjected to the King of *Babylon*, they were no longer in their own power (as they were in the Deſart and

their own Country), but were in all things obliged to obey the King of *Babylon* (as appears by what we have ſaid in the Sixteen Chapter), and by what *Jeremy* ſaith (*Chap. 29. v. 7.*) *Seek ye the peace of that City whither I have cauſed ye to be carried captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof ſhall ye have peace.* They could not ſeek or provide for the peace of that City as Miniſters of Government, becauſe they were Captives; and therefore they were to do it as Servants or Subjects, by keeping themſelves free from Sedition, and by obſerving the Laws of the Government, though very different from thoſe of their own Country: By which it is evident, that Religion among the *Jews* obtain'd the force of a Law by the Command of the Supream Power, which Power being deſtroyed, Religion was no more a Law or Command of that particular Government, but was to be accounted a general Dictate of Reaſon: I ſay, of Reaſon, becauſe Catholick Religion was not yet known by Revelation; we therefore conclude, that Religion, whether it be natural or revealed, acquires the Force of a Command only by the Decree of thoſe who have the Supream Power; and God hath no peculiar Kingdom over Men, but by the Supream Magiſtrate. And this is made

made more clear by what hath been ſaid in the Fourteenth Chapter, where we have ſhewn, That all God's Decrees imply Eternal Verity and Neceſſity; nor can we conceive God as a Prince or Lawgiver to Men; therefore Divine Documents made known to us by the light of Nature, or revealed to us by the Prophets, have not the force of a Law immediately from God, but muſt neceſſarily receive it from thoſe, or by their means, who have the Power of commanding and making Laws; and by their means only we apprehend that God reigns over Men, and directs Humane Affairs according to Juſtice and Equity, which is alſo proved by Experience; for we can find no Footſteps of Divine Juſtice, but where the juſt reign: otherwiſe (to uſe *Solomon*'s Expreſſion once more,) *the like event is to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean*; which made many doubt God's Providence, who believed, that God did immediately reign over Men, and made Univerſal Nature only for their uſe. Seeing then both Reaſon and Experience make it evident, that the power of the Divine Law depends upon the Decrees of the Supream Magiſtrate, it follows, that the Supream Powers are Interpreters of it. Upon what account we ſhall preſently

declare, but firſt we will ſhew, That the External Worſhip of God, and the Exerciſe of Piety, if we will rightly obey God, ought to be perform'd and regulated in ſuch a manner, as may beſt ſuit with, and is moſt likely to preſerve the Peace of the Commonwealth.

Certainly a Man's Piety and Love to his Country ought to be very great; for take away Government, farewel all hope of benefit or ſafety, all things are preſently in a perillous Condition, and the Reign of Rage and Impiety fills all Peoples Minds with Terror and Confuſion. Whence it muſt follow, that what good ſoever I do to my Neighbour, if it be deſtructive to the Commonwealth, may be counted Impiety; and on the other ſide, any hurt done to my Neighbour for the preſervation of the Commonwealth, ought to be accounted Charity; (for Example) if a Man ſtrive with me for my Coat, it is very great Charity in me to give him my Cloak alſo; but where this may endanger the ſafety of Government, it is much greater Charity to bring that Man to Juſtice, though I know he will be condemn'd to death. *Manlius Torquatus* is celebrated in Story, for preferring the Peoples Publick Safety before his own Son's Life. If then Publick Safety be above all Laws, and

and all Laws, both Divine and Humane, have a ſpecial regard to it; if it likewiſe be the Office and Duty only of the Supream Power, to determine what is for the Publick Safety of Government, and to command whatever it thinks is ſo, 'tis a neceſſary conſequence, that no body but the Supream Power ought to determine in what manner a Man ought to ſhew his Love to his Neighbour; that is, in what manner he is bound to obey God. So that now we underſtand why, and upon what ground the Supream Powers are Arbiters and Interpreters of Religion, and that no body can rightly obey God, if he do not accommodate the Publick Practice of Piety whereto every man is obliged, to the publick benefit and peace of the Commonwealth, by obſerving all Commands of the Supream Powers; for ſeeing we are all bound to practice Piety towards all men, none excepted, and to do no man any Injury, it follows, That it is not lawful for any man to do good to one, if thereby he hurt another; much leſs if he thereby endanger the Commonwealth; and no perſon can, according to God's Command, practice Charity towards his Neighbour, unleſs his Religion and Charity be ſo regulated, as to promote the Publick Good. Now no private man can

know what is for the Publick Good, unleſs it be by the Decrees and Laws of the Supream Power, whoſe buſineſs it is to take care of the Commonwealth; and therefore no man can rightly practice Piety, and obey God, unleſs he be obedient to the Decrees and Determinations of the Supream Power, which is verified by common practice: for it is not lawful for any Subject to help or aſſiſt any Man, whom the Supream Power hath judged worthy of Death, or declared to be a publick Enemy. Though the *Jews* were commanded to *love their neighbours as themſelves*, (*Levit. chap.* 19. *v.* 8.) yet if any man had offended againſt the Commands of the Law, they were bound to make it known to the Judge, and in caſe he were condemned to Death, to kill him (*Deut.* 13. 8, 9. and 17. 7.) That the *Jews* might preſerve their Liberty, and keep their Lands in their own poſſeſſion, it was neceſſary (as we have ſhewn in the Seventeenth Chapter) to accommodate their Religion to their Government, and ſeparate themſelves from other Nations. It was therefore ſaid, *Love thy neighbour, but hate thine enemy*, (*Matth. chap.* 15. *v.* 43.) But after they loſt their Government, and were carried away Captives to *Babylon*, then *Jeremy* bid them *ſeek the peace of*

that

that City: And becauſe Chriſt knew they were to be ſcattered and diſperſed into all parts of the World, he taught them the Practice of Charity to all Mankind in general; which evidently proves, That Religion was always accommodated to the publick benefit of the Commonwealth. If any man ask me, by what Right or Authority the Diſciples of Chriſt, who were but private perſons, could preach Religion? I ſay, they did it by Vertue of that Power they received from Chriſt againſt unclean Spirits: (See *Matth. chap.* 10. *v.* 1.) I have in the end of my Sixteenth Chapter expreſly declared, That all men are bound to keep Faith with a Tyrant, unleſs it be ſuch a one againſt whom God hath by Revelation promis'd his particular aſſiſtance; and therefore none can take Example from the Apoſtles, unleſs he have alſo power to do Miracles, which appears by what Chriſt ſaid to his Diſciples, (*Matth. chap.* 10. *v.* 28.) *Fear not thoſe who can kill the body.* Had this been ſaid generally to all men, Government would be to no purpoſe, and thoſe Words of *Solomon* not at all to be regarded, (*Prov. chap.* 24. *v.* 21.) *My ſon, fear God and the King.* We muſt therefore conclude, That the Authority which Chriſt gave his Diſci-

ples, was in a particular manner given only to them, and ought not to be drawn into example by others. I value not the Reaſons which are urged againſt this Opinion, by them that would have the Civil Power to be in the Civil Magiſtrate; but all things pertaining to Religion in the Power of the Church; their Reaſons are ſo frivolous they need no refutation; yet I cannot chuſe but take notice, how mightily thoſe men are deceived, who to maintain (pardon the Expreſſion) their ſeditious Humour, urge the Authority of the *High Prieſt* among the *Jews*; who, ſay they, was the ſole Adminiſtrator of all things that were ſacred and concern'd Religion: But thoſe men may remember the *High Prieſts* received that Power from *Moſes*, who, as we have proved, was the perſon that had the Supream Power, and by whoſe Command or Decree, the *High Prieſt* could at any time be diveſted and deprived of his Power; for *Moſes* did not only chuſe *Aaron*, but alſo his Son *Eleazer*, and his Nephew *Phineas*, and gave them power to exerciſe the Pontifical Office; and though the *Prieſts* always kept that power, yet nevertheleſs were they ſtill but the Subſtitutes of *Moſes*; that is, of the Supream Power: for as we have

made

made it appear, *Moſes* choſe no Succeſſors, but ſo diſtributed all his own Offices, that they who came after him, ſeemed but ſuch Deputies as adminiſter the Government for abſent, not deceaſed Kings. In the ſecond Government the *High Prieſts* were indeed the Supream Magiſtrates, but that was after they had uſurped the Regal Power; but before that Uſurpation, the *Prieſts* always depended upon the Decrees of the Supream Power, and their Kings had abſolute power over all things pertaining to Religion (as ſhall appear by what will be ſaid towards the End of this Chapter.) 'Tis true their Kings could not perſonally officiate as a *Prieſt* in the Temple, becauſe all men that could not derive their Pedigree from *Aaron*, were counted profane and unclean, which is now no Obſtacle in a Chriſtian Commonwealth; for in theſe days, the Prieſthood not being entailed upon any particular Family, but requiring only ſome particular Qualifications, Kings or Supream Magiſtrates, cannot be barred from medling with Matters belonging to Religion, upon any account of profaneneſs; but all is in their power, and no body, but by their authority or allowance, hath any Right to officiate in the Church: for the Power of chuſing Miniſters,

ſters, of ſetling the Church, of ſtating and determining the Doctrines thereof, preſcribing Religious Rites and Ceremonies, judging of Mens Piety and Manners, the power of excommunicating and receiving again into the Church, and of providing for the poor, are all in the Supream Magiſtrate; and theſe things are not only true, but likewiſe very neceſſary, not only for the good of Religion, but alſo for the ſafety of the Commonwealth; for all men know, how much the People eſteem and depend upon the Power and Authority of thoſe, whoſe Function is accounted Sacred, they having an abſolute Dominion over their Minds. He then that endeavours to deprive the Supream Magiſtrate of this Power, goes about to ſhare and divide, or elſe uſurp the Government; from whence muſt neceſſarily ariſe ſuch Contention and Diſcords, as were heretofore between the Kings and *Jewiſh* High Prieſts, which could never be appeaſed. If this Power be taken away from Supream Magiſtrates, how can they determine of Peace or War, or of any other Buſineſs, if they muſt be obliged to follow other Mens Opinions, by whom they are to be taught what is good or evil? That Power is Supream, and there can

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be none greater, which hath the Right of declaring and determining what is Piety, what Impiety, and what in Religion is lawful or unlawful. All Ages have been ſenſible, how many Miſchiefs ſuch a Power in any but the Supream Magiſtrate, hath produced: I will give you but one Example: As ſoon as ſuch a Power was granted to the *Pope*, or *Biſhop* of *Rome*, by degrees he became Superiour to all Kings, and at laſt aſcended to ſo high a pitch of earthly Dominion, that whatever Kings or Emperours have ſince done to leſſen it, hath been to no purpoſe; but they have rather much encreaſed it, and that which no Monarch ever effected by Fire and Sword, Churchmen have been able to do only with their Pen; which is a plain proof of the *Pope's Power*, and a convincing Argument to perſwade Supream Powers, to keep that Authority he pretends to in their own hands. If we conſider the Obſervations I have made in the preceding Chapter, we ſhall find, that the reſiding of this Power in the hands of Supream Magiſtrates, is very much for the Benefit and Advancement of Religion and Piety; for as I have already declared, the Prophets themſelves, though fill'd with Divine Power and Vertue, yet becauſe they

they were but private men, the great Liberty they took in admoniſhing, reproving, and upbraiding the People, did rather provoke than amend them; who notwithſtanding patiently ſubmitted to the Reproof and Chaſtiſement of their Princes. Beſides, Kings themſelves, becauſe they had not the power of judging and determining Matters of Religion, many times forſook the true Religion, and moſt of their People with them; which hath likewiſe, upon the ſame account, often happen'd in Chriſtian Governments. But here perhaps ſome will ask, if Supream Powers ſhould chance to be wicked, who ſhall then have the Power and Authority of vindicating and maintaining Religion and Piety? And who ſhall then be the Interpreters of it? I ask them on the other ſide, What if Prieſts and Eccleſiaſticks grow wicked and impious, muſt they continue Interpreters of Religion, and God's Word? If they that have Supream Power ſhould do whatever they pleaſe, whether they do, or do not meddle with Religion, all things without doubt, both Sacred and Civil, are like to be in a very ill Condition; but in much worſe, when private men ſhall ſeditiouſly pretend to a Divine Right, of defining and defend-

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ing all chings which concern, or in any wiſe pertain to Religion. The denying of this Power to Supream Magiſtrates, muſt neceſſarily cauſe very ill Conſequences; for they will in all probability (as did the *Jewiſh* Kings, who had not this Power abſolutely) grow wicked and ungodly, and from that which is but uncertain and contingent, will follow moſt certain Miſchief and Ruin to the Government. If then we have any regard either to the Juſt Right of Supream Power, to the ſafety of Government, or the advancement of Religion and Piety, we muſt grant, that the regulating and determining all things concerning Religion, and the Worſhip of God, depends upon the Decrees of the Supream Power; and that ſuch only are Miniſters of God's Word, who are authoriz'd by the Supream Magiſtrate, to teach and inſtruct the people in thoſe principles of Religion and Piety, which they that have the Supream Power, think moſt likely to procure the publick Good of the Commonwealth.

I have now no more to do, but to declare the Cauſe, why in Chriſtian Governments there hath been ſo much diſpute about this Power, when in the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth

monwealth it never, that I know, came into controverſie. It is little leſs than a Wonder, that a thing ſo neceſſary and profitable, ſhould ſtill be a Queſtion, and the Subject of continual Cavil; and that Supream Magiſtrates ſhould never be able to exerciſe this Power, without contention, and without fear of danger and prejudice to Religion. If the Cauſe of this could not be found out, I would confeſs all I have ſaid in this Chapter, to be meer Theoretical Speculative Notions, of no uſe; but any perſon that will but look back, and conſider the beginnings of Chriſtian Religion, may eaſily diſcover the Cauſe of this Controverſie. They that firſt taught Chriſtian Religion, were not Kings, but private perſons, who contrary to the Will and Commands of thoſe in Supream Power, whoſe Subjects they were, preached in private Churches or Congregations, and inſtituted Forms of Worſhip, without any reſpect had, or account given to the Government; and likewiſe regulated and determined all things relating to Religion. Though Chriſtian Religion, after many years, began to be profeſt in Commonwealths, by thoſe that had the Supream Power, yet the Eccleſiaſticks, who inſtructed Emperours and Kings in the Chriſtian Religion,

on, were, without any difficulty, ſtill acknowledged Teachers and Interpreters of God's Word, Paſtors of the Church, and God's Miniſters; but that Chriſtian Kings and Princes might not afterwards aſſume any ſuch Authority to themſelves, Churchmen very warily provided againſt it, by forbidding the Chief Miniſters and the High Prieſt of the Church to marry, by multiplying the Doctrines and Tenets of Religion to a prodigious number, and by ſo confounding them with *Philoſophy*, that it was abſolutely neceſſary for the Chief Interpreter, and Judge of Religion, to be a *Philoſopher* as well as a *Divine*, and to buſie himſelf in unprofitable Speculations, fit only to take up private mens time, who have nothing elſe to do. But it was far otherwiſe in the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth; for their Church began with their Government, and *Moſes*, who was the Supream Magiſtrate, taught the people Religion, ſetled their Forms of Worſhip, and choſe their *Prieſts*. This was that which made Kingly Authority ſo much eſteemed by the People, and put the Right and Power of all things pertaining to Religion, into the hands of Supream Magiſtrates; for though after the Death of *Moſes*, no Man governed ſo abſolutely as he did, yet the Right and

and Power of determining all things concerning Religion, as well as other Affairs, ſtill remained, as we have already proved, in the *Prince*; and the People, to be inſtructed in Religion and Piety, were no more bound to go to the *High Prieſt*, than they were to the *Chief Judge*, (*Deut. chap.* 17. *v.* 9, 11, 12) *Thou ſhalt come to the Prieſts, the Levites, and to the Chief Judge, that ſhall be in thoſe days to enquire; and he that will not hearken unto the Prieſt, or unto the Judge, that man ſhall die.* Though the Kings had not power equal to that of *Moſes*, yet the *Prieſts* and *Levites* were appointed and ordered to do what the Kings thought fit; for, as it appears in (1 *Chron. chap.* 28. *v.* 11, 12.) King *David* order'd how the Temple ſhould be built, according to a Model he preſcribed; and as it appears in the 23*d* Chapter of the ſame Book, *David, out of all the Levites, choſe twenty four thouſand to ſet forward the building of the Temple, ſix thouſand to be Officers and Judges, four thouſand to be Porters, and four thouſand to praiſe the Lord upon muſical Inſtruments:* he likewiſe *divided the Levites into companies, and ſet Rulers over them*, which Companies were to ſerve and wait in their turns. For other particulars, I refer the Reader to the

the (28*th* Chapter of the 2*d* Book of *Chron. v.* 13.) where it is ſaid, That King *Solomon* commanded Offerings to be made according as *Moſes* inſtituted: And (*ver.* 14.) it is ſaid, That *Solomon*, according to the order of *David* his Father, appointed the Courſes of the Prieſts and Levites to their Service and Charges; and (*ver.* 15.) the Hiſtorian ſaith, *They departed not from the Commandment of the King, given to the Prieſts and Levites, concerning any matter, or concerning the Treaſures.* By all which, & by other Hiſtories of their Kings, it is evident, that the whole Exerciſe of Religion, and all the Service that concerned it, depended only upon their King's Command: And tho' their Kings had not, as *Moſes* had, the Power of chuſing the High-Prieſt, or of conſulting God without him, or of condemning the Prophets that propheſy'd in their Reigns, the Prophets having power to chuſe a new King, and to pardon any that had taken away a King's Life; yet, I ſay, the Prophets themſelves had no power to call any King to an account for breaking the Laws, or in any judicial manner and form to proceed againſt or condemn him. And therefore if there had been no Prophets who by particular Revelation could pardon the killing of a King,

Kings in the Jewiſh Commonwealth muſt have had abſolute Power over all things both Sacred and Civil, as Supreme Powers have in theſe our Days, who have no Prophets, nor are obliged to receive any; being in no wiſe bound by the Laws of the Jews Commonwealth. And this Power, tho' our Kings marry, they abſolutely have, and may keep, if they do not ſuffer Doctrines and Articles of Religion to be multiplied, or mingled and confounded with Arts and Sciences.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

In a Free Commonwealth it ſhould be lawful for every Man to think what he will, and ſpeak what he thinks.

WEre it as eaſie to command Mens Minds, as it is their Tongues, all Supreme Powers would reign ſecurely, and no Government would be Violent or Tyrannical: For then every Man would live according to the Will of thoſe in Supreme Power, and would think every thing true or falſe, good or evil, juſt or unjuſt, according to their Determinations and Decrees. But it is impoſſible, as we have obſerved in the beginning of the 17*th* Chapter, that any Man's Mind or Thoughts ſhould be in another Man's power; becauſe no Man can transfer, or be compelled to transfer his natural Right of Reaſoning and Judging of Things, upon any other Man: And therefore that Government is counted Tyrannical, which would reign over

Mens Minds; and Supreme Powers do their Subjects wrong, and deprive them of their juſt Right, when they command them to receive or reject, according to their Preſcriptions, whatever they declare to be true or falſe; and poſitively appoint what Opinions and Notions Men in their Devotions ſhall have of God; which is a thing wholly in a Man's own power, and from which no Man, tho' he would, can part. I confeſs, a Man's Judgment may be ſo many ways prepoſſeſt, that tho it be not directly and abſolutely in another Man's power, yet it may have ſuch a dependence on him, as to be thought very much at his diſpoſe; but in ſpite of all that Art can do, Men will abound in their own Senſe, and there will for ever be as many diverſities of Opinions, as there are of Palats: Tho' *Moſes*, not by Craft, but by Divine Power, had ſo prepoſſeſt the Minds of his People, that they believed he ſaid and did all things by Divine Inſpiration; yet he could not eſcape ill Reports and ſiniſter Interpretations; much leſs then can other Monarchs. Were the thing poſſible, it might rather be done in Monarchical, than in Democratical Government, which is managed by an Aſſembly of all, or the greateſt part of the People; and the Reaſon I think is obvious.

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Tho' Supreme Powers have right to all things, and are believed to be Interpreters both of Law and Religion; yet they could never keep Men from judging of things according to their Reaſon and Capacities, nor from being this or that way affected. They may indeed account all men Enemies who do not in all things abſolutely think as they do; but we do not here diſpute of their Power, but of what is moſt convenient and profitable. I grant, that Supreme Powers may Reign Tyrannically, and put Subjects to death for very ſlight Cauſes, if they pleaſe; but all Men will deny that this can be done with Reaſon or Prudence, becauſe it will prove dangerous and deſtructive to the Government: Yea, it may be denied that Supreme Magiſtrates have abſolute Power, and conſequently have not abſolute Right to do ſuch things as theſe; becauſe we have proved, that the Right of Supreme Magiſtrates is determined by their Power. If then no Man can part with this Liberty of Judging and Thinking what he will, but every Man by the Sovereign Right of Nature is Maſter of his own Thoughts. Supreme Powers in any Commonwealth can never hope for Succeſs, in preſcribing to Men of different Opinions, Limits and Rules for what

they ſhall ſay: For if Wiſe-men cannot keep ſilence, much leſs can the ignorant Multitude hold their peace, it being all Mens Infirmity, tho' never ſo much Secreſie be required, to make others privy to their Counſels: And therefore that Government is Violent, where every Man is deny'd the Liberty of ſaying and declaring what he thinks; and that Government is moderate and well ordered, where ſuch a Liberty is allow'd. 'Tis true, and no Man can deny, but that Supreme Magiſtrates may be injur'd and offended by Words as well as Deeds; and tho' it be impoſſible wholly to take away this Liberty from Subjects, yet, on the other ſide, it will be pernicious to put no Reſtraint upon it: So that now my Buſineſs is to ſhew, how far this Liberty, without any danger to the Peace of the Commonwealth, or prejudice to the Right of Supreme Power, may and ought to be allow'd; which was, as I have hinted in the beginning of the *16th* Chapter, my chief Intention and Deſign.

From the Fundamentals of Government which I have already explain'd, it clearly follows, That the ultimate End of Government is not to domineer, and keep Men in fear and Subjection; but to free Men from Terror, that every Man

may

may, as far as 'tis poſſible, live ſecurely; that is, may ſtill retain his natural Right of ſubſiſting and acting without hurting himſelf, or any other perſon. I ſay, The End of Government is not to turn Rational Men into Beaſts or walking Engines, but to ſuffer both their Souls and Bodies to do each their proper Duties, allowing them the free Uſe of Reaſon, that they may not by Hatred, Envy, Anger, or Deceit, become Enemies to one another: So that the End of Publick Government is indeed Liberty; and to the forming of a Commonwealth, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that the Power of making Laws and Decrees ſhould be either in all, in ſome, or in one ſingle Perſon: For ſeeing in every Man's Opinion, tho' it be free, there is difference and variety, and every Man is apt to believe that he knows all things; 'tis impoſſible to make them all of one mind, or to agree in their Diſcourſe. So that they can never live peaceably, unleſs every one part with his power of doing what his own Mind prompts him to. But tho' every one part with the power of doing what he pleaſes, yet he doth not part with his power of Reaſoning and Judging; ſo that tho' he cannot without offence act or do any thing againſt the Decrees or Determina-

tions of the Supreme Powers; yet he may freely think, judge, and conſequently ſpeak; provided in what he ſimply ſpeaks or teacheth, there be Reaſon, and no crafty malicious Deſign, through Hatred or Revenge, to make, by vertue of his own Authority, Innovation in the Commonwealth. For example, If a Man think a particular Law contrary to right Reaſon, and therefore fit to be repealed; yet if he ſubmit his Opinion to the Judgment of the Supreme Power, (whoſe Right it is to make and repeal Laws) and in the mean time do nothing contrary to the Tenor of that Law, he deſerves well of the Commonwealth; as doth every good Subject: But if, on the contrary, he ſpeak againſt that Law purpoſely to accuſe the Magiſtrate of Injuſtice, and to render him odious to the People; or if he ſeditiouſly endeavour to abrogate that Law, in ſpite of the Magiſtrate, he is a rebellious Diſturber of the Publick Peace.

We ſee then upon what ground every Man, without prejudice to the Peace of the Commonwealth, or to the Right of Supreme Powers, may ſpeak and teach what he thinks, if he leave them the power of regulating Mens Actions, and do nothing contrary to their Decrees, tho'

tho' he ſometimes do contrary to that which in his own Opinion and Judgment he thinks to be good; which notwithſtanding he may with a good Conſcience, yea ought to do, if he will be accounted a good Subject. For, as I have already ſhewn, Juſtice depends upon the Decrees of the Supreme Power, and no Man can be ſaid to be Juſt, unleſs he live according to the known Laws. Piety, as I have declared in the preceding Chapter, chiefly conſiſts in the practice of things which preſerve the Peace and Tranquillity of the Commonwealth; which cannot poſſibly be preſerved, if every Man ſhould live as he pleaſeth: And therefore 'tis Impiety in any Subject, to act contrary to the Decrees of the Supreme Power; becauſe, were it lawful for every Man ſo to do, the total Ruine of the Commonwealth muſt neceſſarily follow. No Man can be ſaid to act againſt the Dictates of his own Reaſon, who ſubmits to the Decrees of the Supreme Power; becauſe every Man by the perſuaſions of his own Reaſon reſolved to part with his Right of Living according to his own Will: And this is proved by practice; for in Councils compos'd of the Supreme or Subordinate Powers, it ſeldom happens that any thing is decreed or determin'd

min'd by the univerſal Conſent and general Vote of all the Members; yet the Reſults of thoſe Counſels, whatever they be, are always accounted as much the Decrees of thoſe who voted againſt, as of thoſe that voted for them: So that by the very Principles of Government, we ſee, that without any wrong done to the Rights of Supreme Power, a Man may uſe the Liberty of his own Judgment: And 'tis very eaſie from the Fundamentals of Government, to determine what Opinions in a Commonwealth are to be accounted Seditious; namely, thoſe which directly nullifie and deſtroy the Covenant, whereby every Man obliged himſelf to part with his Right of Living according to his own Will. For example, If any Man think the Supreme Power is ſubject to ſome other Power; that a Man ought not to perform his Promiſes; or, that it is lawful for every Man to live as he pleaſes: Theſe, and the like Opinions, render a Man ſeditious, becauſe they are directly repugnant to the foreſaid Covenant; not barely becauſe they are his Judgment and Opinion, but becauſe ſuch Opinions have in them a great deal of Crime and Guilt: For even by ſo thinking, a Man tacitly breaks all the Bonds of that Fidelity which he promiſed

ſed to the Supreme Power. Therefore other Opinions, which contain no actual Breach of the Covenant, no Revenge, no Anger, *&c.* are not to be accounted Seditious, unleſs it be in a Commonwealth where Reaſon is depraved, and where ambitious and ſuperſtitious Men are grown to ſuch a heighth, that they cannot endure thoſe that are honeſt or ingenuous, but will have the People think their Authority greater than the Supreme Magiſtrate's. I do not deny, but that there may be ſome Opinions, which tho' they ſeem to intend nothing but ſimply to argue and judge, what is true, and what falſe; yet they may be very maliciouſly propounded and divulged: Of theſe we ſpoke in the 15*th.* Chapter, but ſo that Reaſon nevertheleſs ſhould remain free. Laſtly, If we ſeriouſly conſider, that every Man's Fidelity to the Commonwealth, as his Faith towards God, ought to be judged and known only by his Works; namely, by Charity towards his Neighbour; we cannot doubt but that the beſt Commonwealths will give every Man the ſame Liberty of Reaſoning, that they do of Believing. I confeſs, by ſuch a Liberty ſome Inconveniences may ſometimes happen: But what Wiſdom and Prudence can prevent all Inconveniences?

He that by Laws thinks to prevent all, will ſooner provoke then amend vicious Men. Inconveniences that cannot poſſibly be prevented or avoided, muſt be tolerated; we muſt bear with them, tho' we ſuffer by them. Of how many Miſchiefs are Luxury, Drunkenneſs, Envy, and Covetouſneſs the Cauſe? Yet theſe are tolerated, becauſe tho' they be Vices, it is not in the power of Laws to reſtrain them. How much more then ought Liberty of Judgment to be allowed, which is truly a Vertue, and ſhould not be ſuppreſt? No Inconveniences can ariſe from it, which may not, as I will prove, be avoided by the Authority of the Supreme Magiſtrate. Beſide, this Liberty is very neceſſary to the Advancement of Arts and Sciences, in which the greateſt proficiency is made by thoſe men who have their Judgments free from preoccupation. But ſuppoſe mens mouths may be ſtopt, and ſo awed, that they ſhall not dare to utter any thing againſt the Determinations of the Supreme Power; yet 'tis ſtill impoſſible to keep them from thinking what they pleaſe; and when men think ill of Magiſtrates, there breach of Faith ſoon follows; and nothing is to be expected in ſuch a Commonwealth, but abominable Flattery,

Perfidy,

Perfidy, and the deſtruction of all ingenious Arts. 'Tis not ſo eaſie a matter to keep men from talking; the greater care is taken to keep them ſilent, the more many times will they talk. Perhaps Covetous men, Flatterers, and mean-ſpirited People, who place their chiefeſt Felicity in filling their Bags and their Bellies, may hold their Peace; but vertuous honeſt men, who have had Liberal Education, cannot be ſilent: Such is mens Nature, that nothing is a greater Vexation to them, than to ſee thoſe Opinions, which they verily believe to be true, condemn'd; and themſelves accounted wicked and ſinful, for doing that which they think is their Duty both towards God and Man. This makes them deteſt the Laws, and count any ſeditious Attempts againſt the Magiſtrate lawful and juſt. In Laws againſt Opinions, wicked men are ſeldom concern'd; ſuch Laws are commonly made, not to reſtrain bad, but to provoke good men; and cannot be defended without a great deal of danger to the Government: Such Laws are likewiſe uſeleſs; for men cannot obey Laws which condemn thoſe Opinions they firmly believe to be true: And, on the other ſide, they who think thoſe Opinions falſe, take the Laws that condemn

condemn them, to be be their Priviledges; wherein they ſo triumph, that afterward the Magiſtrate, if he would, is not able to repeal them. Laſtly, The making of ſuch Laws hath often cauſed great Schiſms in the Church; for if men did not hope with the general applauſe of the People to inſult over their Adverſaries, and get Preferment, by procuring the Magiſtrate to favour, and the Laws to countenance their Opinions, Learned Doctors would quickly leave their fierce Diſputes, and bitter Contentions. Reaſon and daily Examples tell us, That Laws which command what every man muſt believe, and forbid ſpeaking or writing againſt this or that Opinion, are commonly inſtituted to gratifie or give way to the Paſſions of thoſe, who rather than endure a Baffle from ingenious men, will with their ſtern and moroſe Authority turn the Peoples Zeal into Fury, and hound them on upon whom they pleaſe. But would it not be much better, to ſuppreſs the Anger and Rage of the Multitude, rather than make Laws againſt men that love Vertue and Learning, and bring the Commonwealth into ſuch a Condition, that honeſt harmleſs men cannot live in it? What can be more miſchievous to a Commonwealth, than

than to ſend Honeſt men like Rogues into Baniſhment, only becauſe they are of this or that Opinion, and cannot diſſemble? Can any thing be more pernicious, than to treat Perſons of a free ingenuous diſpoſition like Enemies, and for no Crime or Wickedneſs put them to death, making the Scaffold, which frights none but Villains, a publick Theatre whereon innocent Perſons give ſuch Examples of Courage and Patience, as turn to the ſhame and reproach of the Supreme Magiſtrate's Majeſty? They that know themſelves to be honeſt, never fear Puniſhment, as the wicked do; neither will they by baſe whining Submiſſions and Recantations endeavour to avoid it: Their innocent Minds are not troubled with Guilt or Repentance; they do not think it ſhameful, but glorious, to die for Liberty and a good Cauſe. To whom can their Death be a Terror? The baſe ignorant Multitude know not why they ſuffer; honeſt men are their Friends, and none but ſeditious Perſons their Enemies; and all but baſe Sycophants and Flatterers, are ready to follow their Example. That Faith and Honeſty then may be in greater eſteem, than Flattery and Diſſimulation; that Supreme Magiſtrates may keep their Power, and not be forced to yield

yield to ſeditious Perſons, Liberty of Judgment ought to be allowed, and men are ſo to be govern'd, that tho' they be of different and contrary Opinions, they may however live together in peace and amity. Without doubt this way of Governing is beſt, and ſubject to leaſt Inconveniences, ſeeing it is moſt agreeable to Mens Nature: For in Democratical Government (which comes neareſt to the State of Nature) all covenant to act, but not to reaſon and judge by common Conſent; my meaning is, becauſe all men cannot think the ſame things, they have agreed to make that a binding Law which had moſt Voices, reſerving ſtill a Power of repealing that Law, when they thought fit. And therefore where there is leaſt Liberty allow'd of Judging, there men are fartheſt from their natural State, and the Government is full of Force and Violence. To make it evident, that from this Liberty can ariſe no Inconveniences which the Supreme Magiſtrate may not with eaſe avoid, and keep men of contrary Opinions from hurting one another, I need not go far for Examples. The City of *Amſterdam* hath, to the wonder of all the World, and its own great advantage, taſted the Fruits and Benefit of this Liberty; for in that flouriſhing

Common-

Commonwealth and famous City, men of all Nations and Religions live together in peace; and when they would truſt any man with Goods or Money, they only deſire to know whether he be rich or poor, or whether in his Dealing he be a man of his Word, or a cheating Knave; they never enquire of what Religion or Sect he is, neither is that regarded in any Court of Juſtice; there is no Sect ſo odious, but hath the Publick Magiſtrate's Protection, if they do no man wrong, live honeſtly, and give every one his Due. How great a Schiſm was there occaſion'd not long ſince, by a Controverſie in Religion, between the Remonſtrants and Contra-remonſtrants? And it appeared by many Examples, that Laws made to take away Diſputes concerning Religion, did much more provoke than pacifie People, and made ſome take the greater Liberty. Schiſms proceed not from the ſtudy of Truth, that Fountain of Meekneſs and Moderation; but from an imperious Humour of preſcribing to others: And therefore they are rather to be counted Schiſmaticks, who damn other mens Writings, and ſtir up the waſpiſh Multitude againſt them; than thoſe that write to Learned men, and call nothing but Reaſon to

their aid: So that they are truly Diſturbers of the Publick Peace, who in a Free Commonwealth would take away the Liberty of mens Judgments, which ought not to be ſuppreſt.

We have now ſhewn, *Firſt*, That 'tis impoſſible to take away mens Liberty of ſpeaking what they think: *Secondly*, That this Liberty may without prejudice to the Rights of Supreme Power be granted to every man, and that every man may uſe this Liberty, provided he deſign no Innovations in the Commonwealth, and act nothing againſt the known eſtabliſh'd Laws thereof: *Thirdly*, That this Liberty, which every man may enjoy if he do not break the Publick Peace, can cauſe no Inconveniences which may not eaſily be reſtrained or remedied: *Fourthly*, That all men may make uſe of this Liberty without being guilty of any Impiety. *Fifthly*, That all Laws made concerning Opinions and Matters meerly ſpeculative, are uſeleſs and unprofitable. *Sixthly*, and laſtly, we have proved, That this Liberty may not only be allow'd, without any Danger to Publick Peace, Piety, and to the Right of Supreme Power; but ought to be granted for the Preſervation of all theſe: For where there are Endeavours to take away this

this Liberty, and men are arraigned only for Opinions, without examining whether they have any evil Intentions, there honeſt men are made Examples, and ſuffer a Martyrdom; which doth not at all terrifie but irritates and moves the People to Pity and Revenge. Learning and Arts decay, Faith is corrupted, Flatterers and perfidious Perſons are countenanced, Adverſaries triumph in having their Will, and prevailing on the Supreme Powers to embrace their Doctrine, which at laſt inclines them not only to undervalue, but uſurp their Authority, boaſting they are God's Elect, that their Power is from God, but the Magiſtrate's Authority only from men, and conſequently, the Magiſtrate's Power ſubordinate to theirs; which abſolutely deſtroys the very Being of all Commonwealths; and therefore, as I ſhew'd in the 18*th.* Chapter, a Commonwealths greateſt Safety is to place Religion and Piety in the Practice of Juſtice and Charity, and to make things Sacred as much ſubject to Supreme Power, as things Civil, and to take cognizance of nothing but mens Actions, ſuffering every man to think what he will, and ſpeak what he thinks.

I have now in this Treatiſe done what I deſign'd; and I do again ſincerely profeſs,

feſs, That I have written nothing which I do not freely ſubmit to the Examination and Judgment of the Supreme Powers of my Country: If they think any thing I have ſaid, be contrary to the Laws or Publick Safety thereof, I recant it. I know my ſelf a man ſubject to Errors; but my chiefeſt Care hath been to write nothing but what is conſonant to Reaſon, to the Laws of my Country, and to the Rules of Piety and Good Manners.

FINIS.
